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IMAGINATIVE

BIOGRAPHY

BY

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SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, BART.

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IMAGINATIVE BIOGRAPHY.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

WHO is there that will not read with a heart first expanding with admiration, and afterwards wrung with resentment and sorrow, the story of RALEIGH, though a thousand times told?

Sir Walter Raleigh was born in 1552, at Hayes Farm, in the parish of Budley, in that part of Devonshire which borders eastward on the sea, near the spot where the Ottery discharges itself into the British chan-

nel. He was the fourth son, and the second by a third wife, of Walter Raleigh of Fardel, in the parish of Cornwood, near Plymouth, Esq. His father was of an ancient knightly family; and his mother was Catharine, daughter of Sir Philip Champernoun, of Modbury, in the same county, relict of Otho Gilbert, of Compton, the father by her of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the celebrated navigator.

We are anxious to search out the fountain head of greatness, and to see if we can discover in the ancestor any of those ingredients which afterwards, in a favoured descendant, burst out into a blaze of fame. We can trace nothing of this kind in the progenitors of Sir Walter. Their lot seems to have been confined to provincial honours, where they alike were shut out from the extended glory and the severe misfortunes of him who rendered their name illustrious

over the wide globe. His father had only a lease in the farm at Hayes, which afterwards passed into other hands; and it appears that after he had begun to make his fortune, he was obliged to seek a residence for himself.

Sir Walter was educated at Oxford, where he resided three years; and then, in 1569, at the age of seventeen, formed one of the select troop of a hundred gentlemen, whom Queen Elizabeth permitted Henry Champernoun to transport to France, for the assistance of the protestant princes there. A service of six years on that great theatre not only fully taught him the duties of a soldier, but improved his natural sagacity, and extensive knowledge of mankind. In 1575, he appears to have taken up his abode in the Middle Temple, as his commendatory verses, prefixed to George Gascoigne's "Steel Glass," are dated from that place.

Soon afterwards his active spirit again led him abroad, and he engaged in the service of the Prince of Orange in the Low Countries, where the auxiliary forces were commanded by Sir John Norris. It is supposed that he was engaged at the battle of Remenant, on the 1st of August, 1578.

The next year he engaged with his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who had obtained a patent for planting and inhabiting certain parts of North America, in a naval adventure to that newly discovered world. This enterprize was unsuccessful; and the adventurers returned after encountering many misfortunes, with the loss of one of their ships.

In 1580, the Pope having instigated the Irish to unfurl the banner of rebellion, Raleigh accepted a captain's commission under the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Arthur Grey,

Lord Grey de Wilton. Here he distinguished himself by his skill and bravery. In 1581, the Earl of Ormond departing for England, his government was given to Captain Raleigh, in commission with Sir William Morgan and Captain Piers. Raleigh resided chiefly at Lismore, and spent all this summer in the woods and country adjacent, in continual action with the rebels.

Discontents, and heart-burnings and disputes, ensued between Lord Grey and Raleigh, which will be seen by some curious expressions in a letter of Raleigh's to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, dated from Lismore, in 1581.

The Lord Deputy Grey was the patron of Spenser; and here that eminent poet probably formed his friendship with Raleigh.

Raleigh's services in Ireland now ended; and on his return to England, his disputes

with the lord deputy came before the council table. Sir Robert Naunton says, in his *Fragmenta Regalia*, "I am somewhat confident, among the second causes of his growth, was the variance between him and my Lord General Grey, in his *second* descent into Ireland, which drew them both over to the council table, there to plead their own causes; where what advantage he had in the case in controversy I know not, but he had much the better in the manner of telling his tale, inasmuch, as the queen and the lords took no slight mark of the man and his parts, for from thence he came to be known, and to have access to the lords; and then we are not to doubt how such a man would comply to progression. And whether or no my Lord of Leicester had the cast in a good word for him to the queen, which would have done him no harm, I do not

determine; but true it is, he had gotten the queen's ear in a trice, and she began to be taken with his election, and loved to hear his reasons to her demands. And the truth is, she took him for a kind of oracle, which nettled them all; yea, those that he relied on began to take this his sudden favour for an alarm, and to be sensible of their own supplantation, and to project his; which made him shortly after to sing,

'Fortune, my foe, why dost frown?'"

These openings at court did not deter Raleigh from engaging in those expeditions of naval discovery which were most congenial to the spirit of his adventurous genius. His brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, having resolved to make a second attempt on America, Raleigh built and sent on that undertaking a bark of two hundred tons. On June 11, 1583, the fleet sailed from Ply-

mouth; but in four days a contagious disease, which had seized the crew of our hero's vessel, necessitated them to part company with the rest, and return to port. Sir Humphrey himself, with two of his vessels, was lost in his return from this voyage.

Raleigh was not discouraged; but drawing fresh hopes from the information obtained in this attempt, laid a plan before the queen and council by which he obtained a grant, dated March 25, 1584, of "free liberty to discover such remote heathen and barbarous lands as were not actually possessed by any christian, nor inhabited by christian people." For this purpose he fitted out two vessels, which sailed on the 27th of April following; and reaching the Gulf of Florida on the 2nd of July, sailed one hundred and twenty miles along the shore, and, at last, debarking on a low land, called *Wokoken*, took possession

of it in the name of the Queen of England; and returning home about the middle of September, made such a report, that her majesty adopted the design of planting a colony there, and gave it the name of VIRGINIA.*

At this time Raleigh had risen into such importance, as to be elected representative in parliament for his native county; and in the following year, 1585, received from the queen the honour of knighthood: an honour which, from the sparing hand of that monarch, was considered an high distinction. In March, 1585, he engaged with his brother, Sir Adrian Gilbert, in prosecuting the discovery of the north-west passage, in which attempt they employed Captain Davis, an experienced navigator, who soon after fell upon that which is still well-known by the name of *Davis's Straits.*

* See Hakluyt's Voyages.

In April, of the same year, Sir Walter sent out a fleet of seven sail, under the command of his cousin, Sir Richard Granville, of Devonshire, to plant his new colony of Virginia, of which Ralph Lane was appointed governor. Sir Richard returned to Plymouth on the 18th of October following, having taken in his passage home a Spanish prize worth fifty thousand pounds, and having left behind him in Virginia a colony of one hundred and seven persons, among whom was the celebrated mathematician, Thomas Hariot.

At this time happened the suppression of the rebellion of Munster, in Ireland; and the forfeited lands were divided in signiories among those who had been active in its reduction. Raleigh obtained a grant of twelve thousand acres in the counties of Cork and Waterford, which he planted at his own expense, and at the end of this reign sold to Richard Boyle,

afterwards the great Earl of Cork, who owns this purchase to have been the first step to his future vast fortune.

In 1586 he fitted out a third voyage to Virginia, under Sir Richard Granville, who found on his arrival the former settlers had already deserted it. Sir Richard left fifteen men there; and in his passage home took some prizes at the Azores. Two other ships also, which he despatched to those parts, had equal success against the Spaniards. In this year he became an adventurer with George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, to the South Seas.

Such at this time was his influence at court, as well as general fame, that the queen appointed him seneschal of the duchies of Cornwall and Exeter, and lord warden of the stannaries in those counties. Envy, the almost inevitable attendant on greatness, now began to pursue him; and the Earl of Leicester, his

former patron and friend, is said to have grown jealous of his influence with her majesty, and to have set up in opposition to him Robert Devereux, the young Earl of Essex.

Early in 1587, Raleigh prepared a new colony of one hundred and fifty persons for Virginia, under the command of Mr. John White, whom he appointed governor, and who departed from Portsmouth with three sail, on April 26, and arrived at Hattarass 23d July following. They found the colony already dispersed; and while returning home for supplies, a new fleet was prepared under Sir Richard Granville, which was, however, prevented from sailing by the threat of the Spanish invasion. Governor White was sent, therefore, with only two small pinnaces, and sailed from Biddeford on April 22d; but these vessels receiving material injuries on their voyage, in engagements with the enemy, returned without having completed

their expedition, to the distress of the planters abroad, and regret of their patrons at home.

Another mark of royal favour was now conferred on him. He was appointed captain of her majesty's guard. In this year Sir Walter distinguished himself by the active part he took against the Spanish armada.

On March 7, 1589, he assigned over all his rights in the colony of Virginia to certain merchants of the city of London. In April, 1589, he accompanied Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake in their expedition to Portugal, to restore Don Antonio, the monarch of that kingdom, who had been expelled from his dominion by Philip II. of Spain. For his conduct on this occasion he was honoured by the queen with a gold chain.

On his return home he touched upon the coast of Ireland, being, as it seems, debarred from the court by the jealousy and intrigues of

Lord Essex. Here he visited Spenser, the poet, in his delightful retreat at Kilcolman, on the banks of the Mulla, in the county of Cork; renewing an intimacy formerly begun on the poet's first arrival in that kingdom. Spenser tells us that Raleigh, sitting beside him under the shady alders on the banks of the Mulla, often provoked him to play some pleasant fit. This appears from his pastoral of '*Colin Clout's come home again*,' dedicated to Sir Walter in 1595. We may conclude from several beautiful passages in this poem, that Raleigh was soon restored to the queen's favour, and that he took Spenser back with him, and introduced him to the queen.

Early in 1592 Sir Walter formed a design against the Spaniards in the West Indies, and proceeded to sea with his fleet on the 6th of May. The next day he received from the queen an order of recal, which he did not

obey till the fleet had reached Cape Finisterre on the 11th, when separating the ships into two squadrons, he divided the command between Sir John Burgh and Sir Martin Frobisher. They took and brought to England the Madre de Dios, the richest prize which had at that time been taken, first estimated by Sir Walter at five hundred thousand pounds, but found afterwards not to produce more than a third of that sum, of which the queen claimed a large share.

An event now occurred, not unimportant to the domestic life of this great man. An amour which took place with Elizabeth, daughter of the celebrated Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, one of the maids of honour to the queen, so offended her majesty, that she sent them both prisoners to the Tower. Sir Walter married the lady, and they proved examples of conjugal affection

and virtue. He continued in confinement till September.

At this time he appeared a conspicuous speaker in parliament. The next year he was so entirely restored to favour, that he obtained a grant from her majesty of the manor of Sherbourne, in Dorsetshire, which had been alienated from the see of Salisbury by Bishop Caldwell. Coker, in his *Survey* of this county, says, "Queen Elizabeth granted the fee-farm of it to Sir Walter, who began very finely to build the castle. But altering his purpose, he built in a park adjoining to it, out of the ground, a most fine house, which he beautified with orchards, gardens, and groves, of much variety and great delight. So that whether that you consider the pleasantness of the seat, the goodness of the soil, or the other delicacies belonging to it, it rests unparalleled by any in these parts."

In 1594 he was made happy by the birth of his eldest son Walter. But the queen's resentment for his conduct towards a lady of her court rankled, it seems, in her bosom. "Finding," says Naunton, "his favours declining and falling into a recess, he undertook a new peregrination to leave that *terra infirma* of the court for that of the waves, and by declining himself, and by absence, to expel his, and the passion of his enemies. Which in court was a strange device of recovery, but that he then knew there was some ill office done him. Yet he durst not attempt to amend it otherwise than by going aside, thereby to teach envy a new way of forgetfulness."

Raleigh now, therefore, having planned his voyage to Guiana, took the command of it himself. He departed from England on Thursday, February 6, 1595, and returned late in the

summer of that year, when he published an account of the [redacted]dition.

At this time he resolved on a second attempt to Guiana: the command of this voyage was given to Lawrence Keymis. He sailed in January 1596, and returned in June following.

Sir Walter now had a chief command in the Cadiz action, under the Earl of Essex, in which he took a very able and gallant part. In the *Island Voyage*, 1597, which was aimed principally against the Spanish Plate Fleets, Raleigh, who was one of the principal leaders, would have been completely successful, had he not been thwarted by the jealousy and presumption of Essex. Early in 1598 Raleigh was sent down to Cornwall, to defend the coast against some threatened attacks of the Spaniards; and he was soon afterwards talked of for the high post of Lord Deputy of Ireland.

On the 20th of September that year, Rowland White writes: "I heard of one that is familiar among them, that Sir Robert Cecil and Sir Walter Raleigh infinitely desire to be barons, and they have a purpose to be called unto it, though there be no parliament."

About June 1600, Sir Walter went over to Flanders with Lord Cobham, and on August 26th of that year was appointed governor of Jersey.

Now came the misfortunes and condemnation of the imprudent Essex. On this occasion there is extant a letter of Raleigh, first printed in *Murdin's State Papers*, which leaves a blot on his character that I confess cannot be effaced from my mind. It is too curious and too characteristic to be omitted:

Sir Walter Raleigh to Sir Robert Cecil.

"SIR,—"I am not wise enough to give you

advice; but if you take it for a good counsel to retreat towards the tyrant, you will repent it when it shall be too late. His malice is fixed, and will not evaporate by any of your mild courses; for he will ascribe the alteration to her majesty's pusillanimity, and not to your good nature, knowing that you work but upon her humour, and not of any love towards him. The less you make him, the less he will be to harm you and yours; and if her majesty's favour fail him, he will again decline to a common person. For after-revenges, fear them not: for your own father was esteemed to be the contriver of Norfolk's ruin, yet his son* followeth your father's son† and loveth him. Humours of men succeed not, but grow by occasion and accidents of time and power. Somerset made no revenge on the Duke of Northumberland's heirs. North-

* Northampton. † Cecil himself.

umberland* that now is, thinks not of Hatton's† issue. Kelloway lives that murdered the brother of Horsey; and Horsey let him go by all his life-time. I could name a thousand of those; and, therefore, after-fears are but prophecies, or rather conjectures from causes remote: look to the present, and you do wisely. His son shall be the youngest Earl of England but one, and if his father be not kept down, Will. Cecil shall be able to keep as many men at his heels, and more too. He may also match in a better house than his, and so that fear is not worth the fearing. But if the father continue, he will be able to break the branches, and pull up the tree, root and all. Lose not your advantage; if you do, I read your destiny. Let the queen hold Bothwell‡ while she hath him: he will ever be the canker of her estate

* Percy. † Sir Christopher. ‡ Meaning Essex.

and safety. Princes are lost by security, and preserved by prevention. I have seen the last of her good days, and all ours after his liberty. Yours, &c.

"WALTER RALEIGH."

This letter strikes me to be the dictation of a man apparently (I do not admit *really*) acute in worldly wisdom, but frightfully wicked. It exhibits an appalling picture of the course of human affairs; of the modes by which success in the paths of public life is too frequently attained and secured; and the consequent value there must be in a long transmission of honours and riches, which, if they were the blessing they are too generally supposed to be, would, when thus gotten, be an impeachment on the justice of Providence. Another awful lesson is here exhibited: Raleigh, in this dreadful letter, is pressing forward for a rival

that snare, by which he afterwards perished himself. He urges Cecil to get rid of Essex. By that riddance he himself became no longer necessary to Cecil, as a counterpoise to Essex's power. Then I have no doubt it was that Cecil become an adept in the abominable lesson of this letter, and conscious of his minor talents but more persevering cunning, resolved to disencumber himself of the ascendant abilities and aspiring and dangerous ambition of Raleigh.

We speak of these times with enthusiasm: our imaginations are inflamed with their chivalrous bent, and the magnanimous understanding and heart of the princess who sat upon the throne. But does not a more deep and calm reflection see much to disapprove, and much which fills us with horror in this boasted reign? A monarch of sagacity and resolution, whose affections were set upon the happiness and

glory of her nation, and who generally employed fit means for her purposes, yet of despotic principles, liable to fits of caprice, and even favouritism; untouched by finer feelings; exacting hard measure in the services of those that she employed; and by no means nice in the sacrifice of any one whom her opinion of state necessity induced her to abandon.

Her favouritism, though it yielded at last, after a dangerous and fatal struggle, to her sense of public duty, displayed itself more glaringly in the case of Essex. In this fond plaything of transient fortune, there were many showy and attractive qualities: but let us ask our sober reason, where were the great virtues, or the transcendent intellect, or the unselfish heroism? What affair did he conduct, what expedition did he command, in which he shewed superior skill? In what great business was he employed, in which the gratification of

his own private fame and vanity does not appear in the primary object. A childish jealousy of Raleigh induced him to thwart great national concerns, over which he ought not to have presided.

When we see this young nobleman put over the head of Raleigh, a man of so much longer experience, of talents so much more profound, of enduring fortitude so much more sublime, what can we say for this occasional weakness of a princess, whose transcendent exercise of the reins of power we are so habituated to extol? We must not attribute it to the superior birth and rank of Essex; though this would have been at least as excusable as that absurd and unseasonable attachment of old age to youth, from which it flowed. The queen, however, gave a degree of superiority to birth and rank, which in our more enlightened days, excites a just indignation. If it

be unwise to make the road of ascent to low men too easy. Raleigh was not a low man; and great talents, long tried, and well exerted, ought, at all times, and in every state, to have the first place. But this illustrious queen, whose magnanimous spirit and powerful sagacity knew in general by what instruments to govern, carried to the grave with her all the sunshine and all the happiness of Raleigh. Now the storm, which the witchery of the wicked Cecil had been conjuring together, burst upon his head. A prince from the North, with a meanness of soul which has no parallel, and a narrow subtlety of intellect, which is worse than folly, ascended the British throne, and changed the face and character of the court and the nation. King James frowned on Raleigh, and within three months entertained a charge against him for high treason. This supposed conspiracy, so well known by

the name of Raleigh's *Plot*, remains a mystery to this day. Those unhappy noblemen (Brooke,) Lord Cobham, and (Thomas Grey,) Lord Grey de Wilton, were involved in the charge, and themselves and their ancient houses ruined by it. But the details of this extraordinary affair have been so often repeated, that I shall refrain from fatiguing the reader by again relating them here.

On November 17th, 1603, Raleigh was brought to his trial at Winchester. The charge was of a plot to advance Arabella Stuart to the crown. The wretched Cobham was produced as an evidence against him: he was tampered with, and equivocated. Raleigh was found guilty; and sentence of execution pronounced.

Sir Dudley Carleton, in a celebrated letter, descriptive of this trial, says, "after sentence given, his request was, to have his answers

related to the king, and pardon begged; of which if there were no hope, then that Cobham might die first. He answered with temper, wit, learning, courage, and judgment, that, save that it went with the hazard of his life, it was the happiest day he ever spent. And so well he shifted all advantages that were taken against him, that were not *fama malum gravius quam res*, and an ill name half-hanged, in the opinion of all men he had been acquitted." It was universally allowed, that there was no legal evidence sufficient to justify this verdict.

After living for nearly a month in daily expectation of being executed, Raleigh was reprieved. On December 15, he was removed to the Tower. About 1608, Sir Walter's estate,* at Sherbourne, was begged by

* This property was afterwards valued by the state at five thousand pounds a-year.

Carr, the favourite, and granted to that wretched nobleman the following year.

Sir Walter being now suffered to linger in the Tower, gave up his time to literature.

Prince Henry favoured this great man. "No king but my father," said he, "would keep such a bird in a cage."

In 1612, on the death of Cecil, whom King James had created Earl of Salisbury, Raleigh entertained hopes of his freedom. In 1614, he had the liberty of the Tower allowed him; and the same year published his *History of the World.*

At length he obtained his release, on March 17, 1616, after twelve years' imprisonment,* a favour only to be obtained by bribery.

The treasures of Guiana still haunted the mind of Raleigh, and he now made prepara-

* Lord Grey died in the Tower, 1614; and Lord Cobham survived Sir Walter about three months, in miserable poverty.

tions for a new voyage. A commission was procured, through the influence of Sir Ralph Winwood, bearing date August 26, 1616. Sir Walter was also offered a regular pardon for seven hundred pounds, which had not been given him on his release. This he declined, by the advice of Sir Francis Bacon, who said, "Sir, the knee timber of your voyage is money. Spare your purse in this particular; for, upon my life, you have a sufficient pardon for all that is past already; the king having, under his broad seal, made you admiral of your fleet, and given you power of the martial law over your officers and soldiers."

On March 28, 1617, Sir Walter sailed with the fleet which he had collected. In November following, he reached the continent of South America.

It is well known that this expedition failed;

nor can it be doubted that the pusillanimous monarch, James, betrayed all the plans to the Spaniards, who thus fortified all the entrances against him.

"For the rest," says Sir Walter, "there was never poor man so exposed to the slaughter as I was. For being commanded by my allegiance to set down not only the country but the very river by which I was to enter it, to name my ship's number, men, and artillery, this was sent by the Spanish ambassador to his master, the King of Spain," &c. &c. His eldest son, Walter, was killed in this expedition, fighting with extraordinary valour, and constant vigour of mind.

On Sir Walter's return, it was alleged that the golden mine was a mere chimera of his imagination. "What," said Howell, "will not one in captivity, as Sir Walter was, promise to regain his freedom? Who would not

promise, not only mines but mountains, of gold for liberty?"

Gondomar inflamed the king by pretending that Raleigh had broken the peace between the two kingdoms of Britain and Spain. Raleigh surrendered himself; afterwards made an unsuccessful attempt to escape when on his journey to London; and was recommitted to the Tower.

It was now resolved that Sir Walter should be brought to the bar of the King's Bench by *habeas corpus*, and execution awarded upon his former sentence. He was accordingly brought up, on October 28, 1618, though taken from his bed under the affliction of an ague fit. Execution was accordingly granted; and he was delivered to the Sheriffs of Middlesex, and conveyed to the Gate House, near the Palace-yard. His heroism did not forsake him. To some, who deplored his misfortunes,

he observed with calmness, that "the world itself is but a larger prison, [redacted] of which some are daily selected for execution."

On Thursday, October 29th, he was conducted to the scaffold, in Old Palace-yard. His countenance was cheerful; and he said, "I desire to be borne withal, for this is the third day of my fever; and if I shall shew any weakness, I beseech you to attribute it to my malady, for this is the hour in which it was wont to come." He then addressed the spectators in a long speech, which ended thus:—

"And now I intreat you to join with me in prayer to the Great God of Heaven, whom I have grievously offended, being a man full of all vanity, and have lived a sinful life, in all sinful callings; for I have been a soldier, a captain, a sea captain, and a courtier, which are courses of wickedness and vice; that God would forgive me, and cast away my sins from

me, and that he would receive me into everlasting life. So I take my leave of you all, making my peace with God."

When he bade farewell to his friends, he said, "I have a long journey to go, and therefore I will take my leave." Having asked the executioner to shew him the axe, which the executioner hesitated to do, he said, "I prithee let me see it! Dost thou think I am afraid of it?" He then took hold of it, felt the edge, and, smiling, said to the sheriff, "this is a sharp medicine; but it is a physician for all evils." He forgave the executioner, and being asked which way he would lay himself on the block, he answered, "So the heart be right, it is no matter which way the head lies." At two strokes his head was taken off, without the least shrink or motion of his body.

Dr. Tonson, Dean of Westminster, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, has given a relation

of this dreadful execution in a letter to Sir John Isham, of Lamport in Northamptonshire, dated November 9, 1618. "He was," says the dean, "the most fearless of death that ever was known; and the most resolute and confident, yet with reverence and conscience. When I began to encourage him against the fear of death, he seemed to make so light of it, that I wondered at him. And when I told him that the dear servants of God, in better causes than his, had shrunk back and trembled a little, he denied not; but yet gave God thanks he never feared death, and much less then. For it was but an opinion and imagination; and the manner of death, though to others it might seem grievous, yet he had rather die so than of a burning fever; and much more to that purpose, with such confidence and cheerfulness, that I was fain to divert my speech another way; and wished him not to

flatter himself; for this extraordinary boldness I was afraid came from some false ground. If it sprung from the assurance he had of the love and favour of God, of the hope of his salvation by Christ, and his own innocency, as he pleaded, I said he was a happy man. But if it were out of an humour of vain glory, or carelessness, or contempt of death, or senseless of his own estate, he were much to be lamented, &c.; for I told him that heathen men had set as little by their lives as he would do, and seemed to die as bravely. He answered, that he was persuaded that no man that knew God, and feared him, could die with cheerfulness and courage, except he were assured of the love and favour of God unto him. That other men might make shew outwardly, but they felt no joy within; with much more to that effect very christianly, so that he satisfied

me then, as I think he did all his spectators at his death," &c.

"He was very cheerful that morning he died, and took tobacco, and made no more of his death than if he had been to take a journey. And left a great impression in the minds of those that beheld him, inasmuch, that Sir Lewis Stukeley and the Frenchman grew very odious."

Another account says, "In all the time he was upon the scaffold, nor before, there appeared not the least alteration in him, either in his voice or countenance; but he seemed as free from all manner of apprehension, as if he had come thither rather to be a spectator than a sufferer; nay, the beholders seemed much more sensible than did he. So that he hath purchased here, in the opinion of men, such honour and reputation, as it is thought his

greatest enemies are they that are most sorrowful for his death, which they are like to turn so much to his advantage."

This unparalleled sacrifice of so great a man to the insolent demands of Spain, gave such a disgust to the people, that the king published a declaration, in justification of the measure, which only increased the odium naturally generated by highly disgraceful measures.

Even one of the ministers wrote to Cottington, our agent then in Spain, (according to a letter preserved by Rushworth,) desiring him to represent to that court, "in how many actions of late his majesty had strained upon the affections of his people; and especially in this last, concerning SIR WALTER RALEIGH, who died with a great deal of courage and constancy; and at his death moved the common sort of people to much remorse, who all attributed his death to the desire his majesty had

to satisfy Spain. Farther, you may let them know, how able a man Sir Walter Raleigh was to have done his majesty service, if he should have been pleased to employ him. Yet to give them content, he hath not spared him, when by preserving him he might have given great satisfaction to his subjects, and had at command, upon all occasions, as useful a man as served any prince in Christendom."

Such was the active life, and such was the afflicting end, of one of the most extraordinary, and one of the most eminent men in the annals of English history. I can scarcely name another, who united so many opposing qualities of greatness.

If there were no other blots in King James's reign, Raleigh's death alone would render it intolerable to every generous and reflecting mind. When I consider what sort of talents and conduct covered Cecil's grave with wealth

and honours, while those of Raleigh led him to the scaffold, and his posterity to extinction in poverty and ruin, my heart bursts with indignation and horror!

His *History of the World*, that work of stupendous learning, by which he soothed, for so many years, the pressure of those iron chains which bound down his active body, would alone have immortalized his name. It begins with the creation, and ends a little before the birth of Christ, a period of four thousand years. It has, however, been pronounced to be rather "an historical dissertation," than "to rise to the majesty of history." But the extent of his learning, and the power of his judgment, have been extolled as wonderful.

A collection of valuable prose tracts, by Sir Walter, upon many political questions of great interest, which arose in his time, was published by Dr. Birch, in two vols. 8vo. 1751. They

contain a rich fund of political wisdom, applicable far beyond the great occasion which gave birth to them, expanded by general axioms, and filled with the germs of that noble science, political economy, which the latter half of the last century cultivated with so much success. One of these tracts, entitled, *The Cabinet Council,* had the honour to be the first published in 8vo. by Milton, in 1658. Many other things of his still remain in manuscript, of which Mr. Cayley has given a list.

Raleigh's mind appears to have been characterized by boldness, and freedom from nice scruples, either in thought or action.

He was, as Lodge says of Sydney, a poet rather by necessity than inclination; he only indulged in speculation when he was shut out from action; for his head was restless and turbulent. When no overwhelming passions or

interests misled him, he was generous, and perhaps even feeling.

Difficulties and disappointments gave a sort of moral cast to his poetical effusions.

He possessed all the various faculties of the mind in such ample degrees, that to whichever of them he had given exclusive or unproportionate cultivation, in that he must have highly excelled. There are so many beautiful lines in the poem prefixed to Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, beginning "*Methought I saw*," &c. that it is clear he was capable of attaining an high place among poetical writers.

The mere ascent to greatness in the state, from such a private condition as Raleigh's, could not have been effected in those days without some extraordinary powers of intellect and of spirit; unless, perhaps, through the slow intrigues of gradually-improving office, where daily presence and daily opportunity might find

room for the incessant activity of a selfish cunning; a mode, by which the elevation of Burleigh may probably be accounted for.

We must not compare those days with the present, where private and even low men rise with too little check. I do not doubt, that while climbing up the steep and perilous heights of ambition, Raleigh met with numerous, scarcely supportable, insults as well as threats. Essex was of a generous temper, but he was vain and haughty, and nursed and blown up by intemperate and foolish aristocratical prejudices. Incalculably inferior to Raleigh in all the powers of the understanding, in age, in experience, and exercised wisdom, any insolence, such as his unreserved temper was likely to betray, must have created in a character like Raleigh's, inspired as it was by the most daring consciousness of intrinsic pre-eminence, both in natural and acquired

endowments, feelings of mingled abhorrence, disgust, anger, and disdain, that were not likely to subside without finding some means to discharge themselves on their object. Sir Robert Cecil, a man of industrious parts, always actuated by a crooked and selfish policy, saw and seized this occasion, that he might turn it into an instrument of injury in conducting his own malignant rivalry towards the same imprudent nobleman.

Sackville, Carey, and St. John, who rose to the peerage in this reign, were all related to the queen: the descent of Lord Howard de Walden (afterwards created Earl of Suffolk by King James), was equally illustrious. The father of Norris had suffered in the cause of Anne Boleyn, the queen's mother. Compton possessed large property, and was the heir of a very ancient and distinguished family.

It was a reign, no doubt, of vigorous counsels

and vigorous action: yet the queen was not only jealous and hard to please, but capricious.

It is mortifying to observe, how generally cunning will prevail over talent; not that Raleigh was exempt from descending to this base mode of success: but in him this debasement was occasional; in Cecil it was constant.

Raleigh did not disdain the grossest flattery to the queen;* but he did no more perhaps than every other courtier.

What is called Raleigh's *Plot*, appears to have been nothing like a plot. Perhaps there had been some improper tamperings among the accused. But did James fear Raleigh? He ought then to have taken away the venom of his discontent by employment and confidence.

Do I pronounce Raleigh a poet? Not, perhaps, in the judgment of a severe criticism. Raleigh, in his better days, was too much oc-

* See his letter in Hume.

cupied in action to have cultivated all the powers of a poet; which require solitude and perpetual meditation, and a refinement of sensibility, such as intercourse with business and the world deadens. But, perhaps, it will be pleaded, that his long years of imprisonment gave him leisure for meditation, more than enough. It has been beautifully said by Lovelace, that

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage,"

so long as the mind is free. But broken spirits, and indescribable injuries and misfortunes do not agree with the fervour required by the muse. Hope, that "sings of promised pleasure," could never visit him in his dreary bondage; and ambition, whose lights had hitherto led him through difficulties and dangers and sufferings, must now have kept entirely aloof from one, whose fetters disabled

him to follow as a votary in her train. Images of rural beauty, quiet and freedom might, perhaps, have added, by the contrast, to the poignancy of his present painful situation; and he might rather prefer the severity of mental labour in unravelling the dreary and comfortless records of perplexing history in remote ages of war and bloodshed.

There are times when we dare not stir our feelings, or our fancies; when the only mode of reconciling ourselves to the excruciating pressure of our sorrows, is the encouragement of a dull apathy, which will allow none but the coarser powers of the intellect to operate.

The production of an *Heroic Poem* would have nobly employed this illustrious hero's mighty faculties during the lamentable years of his unjust incarceration. But how could *he* delight to dwell on the tale of heroes to whom the result of heroism had been oppres-

sion, imprisonment, ruin, and condemnation to death?

We have no proof that Raleigh possessed the copious, vivid, and creative powers of Spenser; nor is it probable that any cultivation would have brought forth from him fruit equally rich. But in his poetry, I think we can perceive some traits of attraction and excellence, which perhaps even Spenser wanted. If less diversified than that gifted bard, he would, I think, have sometimes been more forcible and sublime. His images would have been more gigantic, and his reflections more daring. With all his mental attention keenly bent on the busy state of existing things in political society, the range of his thought had been lowered down to practical wisdom: but other habits of intellectual exercise, excursions into the ethereal fields of fiction, and converse with the spirits which inhabit those

upper regions, would have given a grasp and a colour to his conceptions as magnificent as the fortitude of his soul.

I lament, therefore, that these idlenesses of a passing hour, thrown forth without care, and scattered without an attempt at preservation, are all the specimens that we have of Raleigh's poetical genius. To me they appear to justify the praise which I have thus ventured to confer on that genius: but I am well aware that they will be viewed in a very different manner by many others, who will discover nothing in them but the crude abortions of a jejuine wit, and now grown tiresomely obsolete by the changes of time. To him, whose enlarged taste is alive to excellence in every varying fashion of our literature, to him whose mind is not so narrowed by the severity of a cold discipline, as to refuse to throw on the composition some of the interest derived from the character of the man, to him

whose fancy is not too sterile, or too cynical to delight in pastoral poetry, to him, whose sensibility or ardour can cherish with fondness the very fragments of genius, to him whose love of history is enlightened by imagination, and enriched by moral reflections, I refer to the poems of Sir Walter Raleigh, with a glow of satisfaction and triumph.

"A VISION UPON THE FAIRY QUEEN.

Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,
Within that temple, where the vestal flame
Was wont to burn; and passing by that way,
To see that buried dust of living fame;
Whose tomb fair love, and fairer virtue kept,
All suddenly I saw the Fairy Queen;
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept,
And, from thenceforth, those Graces were not seen;
For they this Queen attended: in whose stead
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse;
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce:

Where Homer's spright did tremble all for grief,
And curs'd the access of that celestial thief."

I have been always singularly struck and delighted with the tone, imagery, and expression of this extraordinary sonnet. The author must at this time have been deeply read in works of poetical fancy, and highly imbued with their spirit. Milton had deeply studied this sonnet: for in his compositions of the same class, he has evidently, more than once, the very rhythm and construction, as well as cast of thought, of this noble, though brief, composition.

The major part of these poems possess the internal evidence of traits of Raleigh's genius. We should read his poetry if we are willing to examine nicely and deeply into all the features of the mind of one of the most enlarged geniuses, and one of the most extraordinary men that the annals of this, or of any nation

have recorded. He, who shall think that his poetry has but small share of intrinsic merit, (if any man of enlightened understanding can so think,) must yet peruse it with curiosity, as the production of Raleigh. Nor will I conceal, that highly as I honour poetry, and sublime an art as I deem it to be, I think that even this noble art is glorified by numbering Raleigh among its votaries. It gives me confidence to express an opinion, which I have always entertained, that no man of illustrious intellect, adapted to guide and enlighten the affairs of the world, no great statesman or orator, has existed, or can exist, unendowed with a strong predilection for poetry, with a wish at some period of his life to cultivate its seeds which he finds springing in his bosom, and to grasp at its laurels. The instances are so numerous, that to particularize a few would only weaken my position. If the opinion be

correct, may it not be easily accounted for? Fancy and sentiment are necessary to light and console us through the dark and fearful perplexities of life; and a dry understanding which gropes its way, step by step, is as little fit to guide and govern the passions of mankind, as to produce the splendid array of an epic poem.

Sir Walter Raleigh has been memorialized in hundreds of biographies. I cannot recollect that one has satisfactorily developed his character. He was a very great, but assuredly a mixed character; heroic and sublime in adversity; and his wisdom chastised, and darkly brilliant in misfortune. I believe that he would have been arbitrary, proud, and insolent in success. No one can doubt that he added to great knowledge and wisdom as a politician, great and courageous enterprise, and great practical skill, and prudence, and perseverance.

His mind was full of rich and profound moral observation, not perhaps with much sentiment.

Queen Elizabeth, with her usual sagacity, exactly penetrated his high and extraordinary endowments. The following conversation passed between her and Cecil.

Queen Elizabeth. Robin, when did you see Raleigh?

Sir Robert Cecil. Please your Majesty, I have not seen him lately. He keeps aloof from me.

Q. Eliz. Robin, you are jealous of him; but by —— an able man of the sword, who can at the same time serve me in the state, shall always have my protection.

Cecil. Your Majesty mistakes me: there is no subject of your Majesty whom I admire more than Raleigh, but your Majesty's wisdom knows that he is sometimes capricious, and often moody.

Q. Eliz. Do you think that the leisure hours of such a man are always at the mercy of another?

Cecil. Your Majesty knows that a servant of the public must never think of his own humours.

Q. Eliz. We all have our humours, Robin: you have yours, though you wish to conceal them.

Cecil. Your Majesty is severe upon me.

Q. Eliz. I love to be frank, Robin:—my strength lies in my frankness: I know the worth of all my servants; and I know their failings, too.

Cecil. Your Majesty was always gracious to my father.

Q. Eliz. But I kept him in order. He had his prejudices, his enmities, and his narrownesses.

Cecil. He served your Majesty with a faith-

fulness, which kept the feet of your throne as firm as on a rock.

Q. Eliz. Yes, Robin, but I kept *him* firm; and so I will do Raleigh.

Cecil. Raleigh, by your Majesty's favour, has had a mighty run of fortune.

Q. Eliz. He was not a cradled statesman, Robin, like yourself: but no more was your own father.

Cecil. He makes great pretensions to descent; and displays his ancient quarterings; but your Majesty will allow that he is vain and ostentatious; his father was but a poor man.

Q. Eliz. I love old nobility; but it is well for you, Robin, that I love new also, when they are able.

Cecil. Raleigh is a strong and exuberant plant, which will not bear too much sun.

Q. Eliz. I have not so grand a spirit in my realms.

Cecil. He is too universal in his ambition: no man can do all things.

Q. Eliz. Robin, you are quick, subtle, crafty, and able; but you are envious.

Cecil. I am your Majesty's devoted servant: and am bound to speak my sincere opinions to you, even though I may have the ill luck to be misunderstood.

Q. Eliz. Robin, go your way; I know your value, as well as your faults.

Such was the conversation between the spirited and sagacious queen, and her little, crooked, cunning, laborious and intelligent minister. With all Raleigh's powerful and magnanimous abilities, and an intriguing spirit into the bargain, Cecil beat him in management and diplomacy.

In those days the aristocracy were so powerful, that to make his way in so high a line of

ambition as Raleigh did from so humble a fortune, was a gigantic effort executed with a giant's strength. Queen Elizabeth at the end of her reign had but four men in view for the peerage; and Raleigh was one of them.

His History of the World proves the extent of his knowledge and learning, and the profundity of his opinions: and this written with a broken spirit, in prison, and under the pining health produced by close air, and want of exercise and every cheering comfort. How grand must have been his firey feelings in the high hope of enterprise, bounding over the ocean, and with new worlds opening before him! Well might Spenser call him "The Shepherd of the Ocean."

Nothing is more unaccountable than that his great poem is entirely lost. In all the minor pieces yet preserved, which have been ascribed to him, there is a pastoral, moral,

and amatory spirit, of great elegance, and often fresh and original force. I do not venture to say that inventive imagination is predominant in them. But if he had given up his mind to the Muses, I see no reason why he should not have produced a great epic poem.

He was a man who might have been a Napoleon, had he lived in these days; but with much higher literature than Napoleon. I suspect that he would have been as little nice in his means to arrive at great ends as Napoleon himself. The charge against him, that he urged on the fate of Essex, has never been refuted. He joined Cecil in his intrigues with King James before his accession to the English throne, and Cecil over-reached him. Thus will craft always prevail over stronger power.

His haughtiness had made him in his prosperity not beloved: and if he had influence over the great mind of Elizabeth, his enemies

feared, that if not removed, he would entirely govern the pusillanimity of King James. They were too successful. There are few stories in biography more melancholy and revolting than the future fate of Raleigh. If James's character were tried only by his conduct to Raleigh, it would fix the weakness and blackness of his mind beyond dispute. But what good did James ever exhibit? What single trait of merit is there in all his reign?

Raleigh was, above other men, one who had a head to design, a heart to resolve, and a hand to execute. He lived in an age of great men in every department; but taking a union of splendid qualities, he was the first of that most brilliant and heroic epoch. He was not a poet of the order of Spenser and Shakspeare; but in what other gift and acquirement was he not first?

This great man was finally cast upon times

most unpropitious to his qualities and character. It is absurd to suppose that any one, however powerful, is totally above the controul of circumstances. Bind down the wings of a strong eagle with a chain, and he cannot rise. Had Raleigh lived during the troubles of the subsequent reign, he might have changed the fate of the monarch and the nation. Such a trial and such an execution could not have taken place under any other king; or at least, not under any who succeeded James the First. Even if there were some beginnings of a plot, and this is doubtful, there was no legal proof of it: nor is the matter cleared up to this day.

Prince Henry, a great and generous spirit, was urgent for Raleigh; so was the queen: but the king had a personal hatred to him; the hatred of a little cowardly mind.

Modern historians, and censors of morals,

are too apt to try the characters and actions of men by abstract notions. The strict rectitude which is required in one age may be almost impossible in another. So it is with the courage and talent, which resist tyranny and oppression. In these days a man of a powerful mind, and reputed magnanimity, would lose his fame at once by not bursting the chains of such an oppressor; but a monarch's dominion and force were then of another kind. Perhaps Raleigh would in Charles's time have been a higher and nobler sort of Cromwell. He would have had none of Cromwell's hypocrisy, but would have acted with avowed directness; probably too fiercely and unsparingly: Cromwell had no philosophy, like Raleigh; and nothing of an intellectual and spiritual genius. He was great only in action; and was eminent merely for practical cunning, sagacity, and adroitness. He would never have been a

hero of maritime discovery; and could not have written a page of the History of the World.

Had Raleigh taken the king's side, and been his chief minister, the cause of the people would have never succeeded; Charles would have saved his head and probably have become an absolute monarch. Charles lost his crown by wavering and duplicity, which Raleigh would never have permitted. Raleigh would neither have been dazzled by the splendour of a throne, nor awed by the pride and show of feudal aristocracy, nor intimidated by the ferment and fury of the populace. He would have endeavoured to guide the people's opinion, and allowed no sophistries to go undetected.

These are speculations which many readers may think idle. There are those who say, that we can rely upon nothing but facts: but what

are facts without comment? And what is comment which does not deal in speculation? We can know more of a human being's internal movements by speculation, than by any outward facts. Motives often make the good or evil of a deed; not the fact itself.

I cannot refrain from reflecting on the great change which took place in the minds of the people in the twenty or thirty years which followed the death of Raleigh. They punished even to death little acts of tyranny in Charles, when they bore the most atrocious ones in James. Charles ought to have taken full notice of this change, and have acted accordingly: but he does not appear to have had a profound judgment. The puritans had laid the train in Raleigh's time of the overturn of government, which came at last: but it was not yet ripe for explosion. Charles is accused of duplicity, and of yielding by duresse what

ne meant to take the first opportunity of retracting. Some of the intercepted letters to the queen sanction the opinion. But no man's conscience is bound by what is done by duresse. If his enemies felt rationally assured that no trust could be put in the prince, it was some excuse for many of the harsh and violent cuts, which otherwise are unpardonable.

Hallam, whose character of Charles is very ingenious and deeply examined, remarks on his habits of sanguine reliance, where faith was not merited, and at the same time that suspiciousness which generates duplicity. I cannot exactly reconcile these contradictions. There are certain qualities in human nature, which seem to me never to exist together. A man may trust too much or trust too little: the same man does not alternately fall into both errors.

Many will say that Raleigh would have

been a Strafford in the time of Charles; but there was little similitude in their characters. With Strafford, eminence was the result of dignity: with Raleigh, dignity was the result of eminence: in one it was feudal pride; in the other intellectual power. In one it was fierceness of temper, the effect of natural disposition; in the other, the fire of great designs pursued by direct means. Raleigh was a political philosopher, a political economist, a moralist, and a poet; Strafford was one whose self-confidence lay in his aristocratical strength. Raleigh claimed to rule in right of his better knowledge of what was best for the general welfare and happiness; Strafford, in right of his being born to superiority of rank and wealth. Strafford was a great man, with a strong understanding and a resolute heart, but of a more material cast; Raleigh was spiritual, lofty, and bold in action from

sublimity of mind. Raleigh was a practical statesman as well as Strafford, and could condescend to worldly intrigue, and, perhaps, to some craft. He knew mankind in all their tortuosities, and did not disdain to take advantage of them.

He would probably have played well between the parties in the civil disturbances, have seen their drifts, and known how to defeat them. Charles is to be pitied for having fallen early into the hands of so vain and weak, and self-indulgent a child of fortune as Buckingham,—a minion of royal favouritism, and who supposed thrones and courts made only for the gratification of the *elite!* Charles could not reasonably be expected to rise above all the prejudices of his education. That grand genius, which in times of artificial corruption, generated by ages, ascends into pure abstract truths, and puts them into

practice in defiance of the temptation of selfish passions, will very rarely occur among mankind. Charles certainly was not of this order. He found a hollow security in the splendour of his regal establishment, in the nobles who surrounded him, and in his love of the arts. He did not see what was working under-ground, or in the divans, secret or open, of the various classes and sects remote from the court. He had a mind more accomplished than profound; and looked upon the surface of things with too much passion and admiration. Buckingham inebriated him with these things; Strafford did not turn him from them.

I am not sure that Clarendon himself was not too much enamoured of a court and court craft, though I cannot agree to the detractions which Hallam makes from this eminent statesman's character. Raleigh would have looked

higher; would have seen better the force of the stern pugilists he would have had to contend with; and would have more accurately seen where the danger lay! Clarendon's mind was not quite of the first class: for he admired Cowley, as a poet, above Milton. Raleigh's perfect taste is proved by his admiration of Spenser.

Laud was a weak bigot, proud, peevish, fierce, and vindictive; but, perhaps, sincerely religious, and of a well-intentioned conscience. Strafford coalesced with him; Raleigh would have scorned him.

Raleigh had no likeness to any of his cotemporaries. Bacon had a much higher genius in philosophy and science, but he wanted practical courage and grandeur of heart and soul. He was not Raleigh *tam Masti quam mercurio*. It is not a great spirit which calculates and balances, but which takes bold and sagacious

resolves, and executes them. Among literary men Raleigh was great, but not the greatest. As a poet, none of his productions, which have come down to us, shew an inventive imagination. Shakspeare survived the accession of King James a few years: Ben Jonson lived long; Daniell and Drayton outlived Raleigh; and Phineas and Giles Fletcher, Dr. Joseph Hall, Sir John Beaumont, and others, flourished; while a multitude of versificators and epigrammatists loaded the press. The sublime imagination of Buckhurst had unworthily deserted the Muse for nearly half a century. I think we may conclude that continued practical habits and the action of life damp, if not destroy, the force and fire of poetical genius. Burke and Lord Chatham, if they had not been practical politicians, would probably have been poets. The same may be said of Sir Henry Wotton, a cotemporary of Raleigh.

As long as James left affairs of state in the hands of those who had guided them in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the nation was not altogether disgraced; though, from the commencement, the prosecution of Raleigh and his companions was a stain. But the corrupt profusion of the monarch among his favourites, early introduced immorality, distress, and meanness at home. Cecil, to stem the tide, found the difficulty of managing matters too severe for his strength, and he died at a middle age, worn out with the toil and anxiety of business. He was not a great man; nor, perhaps, of the purest principles, nor most generous disposition; but still he was a very intelligent, skilful, and able minister. Ellesmere held the Seals of Chancellor with great ability, prudence, and integrity. Buckhurst was still left at the head of the Treasury; and Sir Edward Coke was a host in

common law, though of a savage temper and pedantic mind. One of the things for which I cannot forgive Cecil is, that, according to my conviction, he urged on the prosecution of Raleigh. He probably believed that he and Raleigh could not stand in power together: and in this opinion he might be right.

Queen Elizabeth rarely, if ever, mistook the men she employed; and she knew the value of honours, and how to get services done at small costs. In her long reign she did not confer above seven peerages; two of them to her maternal relations, Hunsdon, and Buckhurst; one to St. John, related to her on the part of her paternal grandmother; one to Norreys, the son of one who had suffered in her mother's cause on the scaffold; one to her great minister, Burleigh; one to Compton, of a most ancient family, and one of the richest landed commoners in the kingdom; and one

to Howard, the grandson of the beheaded Duke of Norfolk. But Raleigh was considered by the queen of such importance, that a peerage was in contemplation for him. The queen was above the influence of wealth; neither Spencer nor Cavendish could obtain a peerage in this reign. In those days the honour of knighthood was highly prized, and rarely conferred on obscure men.

A high spirit on the throne brings out high characters among subjects. One is filled with admiration at the galaxy of great men, which the queen's reign produced. Statesmen, soldiers, maritime discoverers, poets, philosophers, divines, lawyers;—Burleigh, Sydney, Nottingham, Raleigh, Drake, Gilbert, Clifford, Buckhurst, Spenser, Shakspeare, Bacon, Hooker, Coke, &c. &c. None of these men have been ever since rivalled in their various departments. And this must be allowed to be a decisive

proof of positive excellence. Many may contend that this arose from the state of society in Europe, and from the point at which the revival of learning had then arrived. It cannot be denied that the epoch was on this account propitious. But it is absurd to suppose that without the aid of the queen's discriminative sunshine it would have brought forth these fruits. All intellect and all heroism changed its character in the time of James.

Would Raleigh have shewn himself in any other reign as he did in that of the gallant princess? Yet it cannot be said that he was always consistent in the strength of his judgment. He joined himself to weak companions in Cobham, Northumberland, &c. And the high-minded Grey of Wilton was too young for so deep a statesman as Raleigh.*

* It is to be regretted that Gibbon did not write the Life of Sir W. Raleigh, as he once intended to have done. Such a character, drawn by such a pen, would have been a splendid piece of biography.

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

THERE is a pleasure of a very pure and elevated kind in paying a tribute to the memory of departed genius. But there are characters which it requires a venturous spirit to touch; the nice shades of intellectual eminence, the evanescent movements of a trembling heart, demand no common pen to delineate them.

Mrs. Charlotte Smith was the daughter of Nicholas Turner, Esq., a gentleman of Sussex, whose seat at Stoke, near Guildford, was afterwards owned by Mr. Dyson.* But her father

* The name of Jeremiah Dyson is well known, as the friend and patron of Akenside.

possessed another house, as it seems, at Bignor Park, on the banks of the Arun, where she passed many of her earliest years; of which she speaks in the following beautiful stanza:

"Then, from thy wildwood banks, Aruna, roving,
Thy thymy downs with sportive steps I sought,
And Nature's charms with artless transport loving,
Sang like the birds, unheeded and untaught."

How enchanting must have been the day-dreams of a mind thus endowed, in the early season of youth and hope! Amid scenery which had nursed the fancies of Otway and of Collins, she trod on sacred ground: every charm of Nature seems to have made the most lively and distinct impression on her very vivid mind; and her rich imagination must have peopled it with beings of another world. She has often addressed the river Arun. The following is her

THIRTIETH SONNET.

"Be the proud Thames, of trade the busy mart!
Arun! to thee will other praise belong;
Dear to the lover's and the mourner's heart,
And ever sacred to the sons of song!
Thy banks romantic hopeless Love shall seek,
Where o'er the rocks the mantling bind with flaunts;
And Sorrow's drooping form, and faded cheek,
Choose on thy willow'd shore her lonely haunts!
Banks! which inspir'd thy Otway's plaintive strain!
Wilds! whose lorn echoes learn'd the deeper tone
Of Collins' powerful shell! Yet once again
Another poet—Hayley, is thine own!
The classic streams anew still hear a lay,
Bright as its waves, and various as its way!"

Mrs. Smith discovered from a very early age, like all minds of active and expanded curiosity, an insatiable thirst for reading, which yet was checked by her aunt, who had the care of her education, for she had lost her mother almost

in her infancy. She did not read as a task, nor according to any regular system, which may be more proper for common faculties, but devoured with eager eyes every book which fell in her way; an indulgence which enlarged the sphere of her observation, and extended her powers. It did not tend to make her, in the pedantic sense, a learned woman; but surely it tended to make her something better; it gave impulse to her powers of inquiry and thinking, and mingled itself with the original operations of a vigorous and penetrating understanding.

From her twelfth to her fifteenth year her father resided occasionally in London, and she was introduced into frequent and various society. It would be curious to have a picture of her feelings and her remarks at that critical period. With that liveliness of perception, and that eloquent simplicity of language, which women of sensibility and talent possess, more

especially at an early age, in a degree superior to the other sex, she must not only have been highly attractive, but have exhibited such a brilliancy of imagination, and of sentiment, yet unsubdued by sorrows, as cannot have vanished unrecorded without justifying the severest regret. But as our faculties can only be ascertained by comparison, she probably did not yet know the strength or value of her own.

It is said that before she was sixteen, she married Mr. Smith, a partner in his father's house, who was a West India merchant, and also an East India director; an ill-assorted match, the primary source of all her future misfortunes. Thus early engaged in the cares of a family, and shut up in one of the narrow streets of the great city, away from the fields and woods which she loved, and among a set of people whose habits and opinions could be little congenial with those of one who had in-

dulged in all the visions of a poetical fancy on the banks of rivers, and in the solitudes of heaths and downs, and hills, and valleys, a temporary damp must have been given to the expanse of her mind. After some time, when the irksomeness of this situation was aggravated by the loss of her second son, Mr. Smith indulged her with a small house, in the neighbourhood of London, where she soothed her retirement by cultivating her early propensity to books, in the intervals which the anxious attention to her children afforded.

At length Mr. Smith's father, who could never persuade his son to give his time or care sufficently to the business in which he was engaged, allowed him to retire deeper into the country, and purchased for him Lyss farm, in Hampshire. In this situation Mrs. Smith, who had now eight children, passed several anxious and important years. Her husband was im-

prudent, kept a larger establishment than suited his fortune, and engaged in injudicious and wild speculations in agriculture. She foresaw the storm that was gathering over her, but she had no power to prevent it; and she endeavoured to console her uneasiness by recurring to the muse, whose first visitings had added force to the pleasures of her childhood. "When in the beech-woods of Hampshire," she says, "I first struck the chords of the melancholy lyre, its notes were never intended for the public ear;—it was unaffected sorrow drew them forth: I wrote mournfully, because I was unhappy."

In 1776 Mr. Smith's father died; in four or five years afterwards Mr. Smith served the office of sheriff of Hants; and immediately subsequent his affairs were brought to a crisis. That dreadful receptacle, the King's Bench, opened her melancholy gates to him; as she

daily does to the victims of innocent misfortune, as well as imprudence and dishonesty,

"Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis,"

and his wife had the virtue and the fortitude to accompany him, and spend the greater part of the seven months he was confined there with him. But during this trying period she was not idle, nor passed her time in unavailing grief. By her exertions principally Mr. Smith at length procured his liberation.

In this awful interval, those talents, which had hitherto been only cultivated for her own private gratification, seemed to offer a resource for the day of adversity. She collected together a few of those poems, which had been hitherto confined to the sight of one or two friends, and offered them to Dodsley. This man, who was now grown old and rich, and who had probably been originally exalted into

the station of an eminent publisher, rather by accident, or his brother's [illegible]ts, than by any powers of his own, received the offer with coldness, cast a hasty and casual glance on the manuscript, and returned them with a stupid indifference. Mrs. Smith, with the sensibility of real genius, felt oppressed and overcome with this brutal discouragement; and but for the impulse of imperious necessity, would probably have sunk into future silence, unconscious of that exquisite superiority of genius, by which for two-and-twenty years she charmed the world.

Mr. Turner, her brother, now tried his powers of persuasion with Dilly, but with equal want of success. The sonnets were therefore printed at Chichester, at the expense of the author, with a dedication, dated May 10, 1784, to Mr. Hayley; and Dodsley, on this recom-

mendation, undertook to be the publisher. A second edition was rapidly called for in the same year.

The manner in which Mrs. Smith has described, in a private letter already given to the public, the event of her husband's liberation, is so eminently interesting, as to call for a repetition of it in this place.

"It was on the second day of July that we commenced our journey. For more than a month I had shared the restraint of my husband, in a prison, amidst scenes of misery, of vice, and even of terror. Two attempts had, since my last residence among them, been made by the prisoners to procure their liberation, by blowing up the walls of the house. Throughout the night appointed for this enterprize, I remained dressed, watching at the window, and expecting every moment to witness con-

tention and bloodshed, or perhaps be overwhelmed by the projected explosion. After such scenes, and such apprehensions, how deliciously soothing to my wearied spirits was the soft, pure air of the summer's morning, breathing over the dewy grass, as (having slept one night on the road) we passed over the heaths of Surrey! My native hills at length burst upon my view! I beheld once more the fields where I had passed my happiest days, and amidst the perfumed turf with which one of those fields was strown, perceived with delight the beloved group, from whom I had been so long divided, and for whose fate my affections were ever anxious. The transports of this meeting were too much for my exhausted spirits. After all my sufferings, I began to hope I might taste content, or experience at least a respite from my calamities."

But this state of happiness was of very short continuance. Mr. Smith's liberty was again threatened, and he was obliged to fly to France to secure it. Thither his wife accompanied him; and immediately returning with the vain hope of settling his affairs, again passed over to the Continent with her children, where, having hired a dreary chateau in Normandy, they spent an anxious, inconvenient, forlorn, and yet expensive winter, which it required all her heroic fortitude, surrounded by so many children and so many cares, to survive.

The next year she was called on to try her efforts in England. In this she so far succeeded as to enable her husband to return; soon after which they hired the old mansion of the Mill family, at Wolbeding, in Sussex, a parish, of which Otway's father had been rector. Here she wrote her

TWENTY-SIXTH SONNET.

TO THE RIVER ARUN.

" On thy wild banks, by frequent torrents worn,
No glittering fanes, or marble domes appear;
Yet shall the mournful muse thy course adorn,
And still to her thy rustic waves be dear!
For with the infant Otway, lingering here,
Of early woes she bade her votary dream,
While thy low murmurs sooth'd his pensive ear;
And still the poet consecrates the stream.
Beneath the oak and beech, that fringe thy side,
The first-born violets of the year shall spring;
And in thy hazles, bending o'er the tide,
The earliest nightingale delight to sing:
While kindred spirits, pitying, shall relate
Thy Otway's sorrows, and lament his fate!"

It now became necessary to exert her faculties again as a means of support, and she translated a little novel of Abbé Prévost; and made a selection of extraordinary stories from " Les Causes Célèbres," of the French,

which she entitled "The Romance of Real Life."

Soon after this she was once more left to herself, by a second flight of her husband abroad; and she removed with her children to a small cottage in another part of Sussex, whence she published a new edition of her sonnets, with many additions, which afforded her a temporary relief. In this retirement, stimulated by necessity, she ventured to try her powers in another line of literature, for here she wrote her novel of *Emmeline, or, the Orphan of the Castle*, 1788. All that part of the public who, though they were disgusted with the usual contents of a circulating library, yet had fancy and feeling enough to judge for themselves, in spite of prejudice, received this enchanting fiction with a new kind of delight. It displayed such a simple energy of language, such an accurate and lively de-

lineation of character, such a purity of sentiment, and such exquisite scenery of a picturesque and rich, yet most unaffected, imagination, as gave it a hold upon all readers of true taste, of a new and most captivating kind. The simple charms of Emmeline, the description of the old castle in Wales, the marine scenery in the Isle of Wight, the character of Godolphin, and many other parts, possessed a charm which had not hitherto been given to novels. How a mind oppressed with sorrows and injuries of the deepest dye, and loaded with hourly anxieties of the most pressing sort, could be endowed with strength and elasticity to combine and shew forth such visions with a pen dipped in all the glowing hues of a most playful and creative fancy, fills me with astonishment and admiration!

But whatever wonder may be excited by this first effort, it will yet be increased, when

we recollect, that for several successive years she still produced others with equal felicity, with an imagination still unexhausted, and a command of language, and variety of character, which have not yet received their due commendation. "Ethelinde" appeared in 1789; "Celestina," in 1791; "Desmond," in 1792; and "The Old Manor House," in 1793. To these succeeded "The Wanderings of Warwick;" the "Banished Man;" "Montalbert;" "Marchmont, 1796;" "The Young Philosoper," 1798; "The Solitary Wanderer;" making together, I believe, thirty-eight volumes.

Besides these, Charlotte Smith wrote several beautiful little volumes for young persons, entitled "Rural Walks," "Rambles Farther," "Minor Morals," and "Conversations;" and a poem, called "The Emigrant," in addition to a second volume of Sonnets.

During this long period of constant literary

exertion, which alone seemed sufficient to have occupied all her time, Charlotte Smith had both family griefs and family business of the most perplexing and overwhelming nature to contend with. Her eldest son had been many years absent, as a writer, in Bengal; her second surviving son died of a rapid and virulent fever; her third son lost his leg at Dunkirk, as an ensign in the 24th regiment; and her eldest daughter, "the loveliest and most beloved of her children," expired within two years after her marriage. The grandfather of her children had left his property, which lay in the West Indies, in the hands of trustees and agents, and when to this complication was added the unfortunate state of her husband's affairs, she had difficulties to surmount in the endeavour to obtain justice, and a series of delays, pretences, misapplications, extortions, and insults, to endure, which must

have agitated a sagacious and indignant spirit almost beyond human patience.

The aid of a high-minded nobleman* is said to have enabled her at last to bring these affairs, of which the embarrassments were thus purposely aggravated, to an accommodation with the various parties who had claims on them. But I have no opportunity of ascertaining whether these arrangements were ever completed before her death. The hour was arriving when grief was at last to subdue her long-tried victim. Her husband, who seems never to have conquered his habits of imprudence, died, as it is said, in legal confinement, in March, 1806. On the 28th of October following, at Telford, near Farnham, in Surrey, after a lingering and painful illness, which she bore with the utmost

* The Earl of Egremont.

patience, retaining her excellent faculties to the last."

I am totally unacquainted with the character of Charlotte Smith from any other source than her writings; but I consider those writings to furnish ample grounds for the delineation both of her intellectual and moral portrait. It appears to me scarcely possible that in such a multitude of volumes, many of them written in haste, the same prominent features should materially vary from those of the author. When, therefore, I have heard dark hints of the harshness of her temper, or the freedom of her principles, I have been not only sceptical, but indignant; and have attributed these foul aspersions to that narrow envy and never-ceasing malice which constantly attend on genius, when it carries itself high, and will not bend to the follies and servilities of the world. I do

not blame those imbecile and yielding spirits which only smile or weep at the hand of the oppressor, and dare not lift up an arm to defend themselves from insult or injustice, but I cannot admire them. I am not sufficiently an optimist to admit that, upon all occasions, all is for the best; to bear, without resistance, the insults of rank or wealth; the scorn of bloated prosperity, the robberies of legal extortion, or the taunts or frowns of unmerited unkindness.

I know that when great talents and superior taste are under the inflictions of adverse fortune, they are considered by stupidity and hard-heartedness as the fair victims on which they may indulge their vengeance and hatred. Then they conceive that the lion is chained down, disarmed of his claws, and they may commence their cowardly and cruel sports upon him with impunity! If he growls, or lifts

a paw, or shakes himself beneath his fetters, he commits an unpardonable offence, and is destined to endless persecution and calumny.

It is probable that the quickness of Charlotte Smith's penetration, and the boldness of her temper, impelled her sometimes to speak unwelcome truths to some of the persons concerned in her affairs, who were generally accustomed to secure themselves by the glare of their riches from too near an inspection. This might be imprudent in point of self-interest; but surely it neither detracted from her virtue, nor from her claims to respect and admiration.

What are the traits which characterize every heroine delineated by her pen? An elevated simplicity, an unaffected purity of heart, of ardent and sublime affections, delighting in the scenery of nature, and flying from the sophisticated and vicious commerce of the world; but capable, when necessity calls

it forth, of displaying a vigorous sagacity and a lofty fortitude which appals vice, and dignifies adversity! Can we doubt that the innocent and enchanting childhood of Emmeline, the orphan of the castle, or the angelic affections of Celestina, were familiar to the heart of the author? They contain touches which the warmest fancy, or the most ingenious head, could never supply.

Yet this is the writer whose works have been deemed immoral! Immoral! by whom? By people who read with pleasure of fashionable intrigues; and wade with interest through all the base and stupid ordure of a circulating library! who delight in the filthy amours of Tom Jones and Peregrine Pickle! who are enraptured with stories of ghosts, and robberies, and rapes, and murders.

There is, indeed one novel of Charlotte Smith's on which this charge of immorality has

been more particularly fixed. This is " Desmond," which turns on the attachment of the hero to a married woman. But how is that attachment regulated, and in what does it end? Does it seek any other gratification than to befriend and protect the beloved object under adversity, dereliction, and trials of the most aggravated nature? Does the lovely Geraldine indulge in any act, any thought or wish, that angels could disapprove? What then is the crime of the author? That she has drawn characters too virtuous for the world! And that she has placed them in situations of trial, which the world must not imitate, because it could not preserve its innocence in them.

But I hear it objected that there is a deficiency of religion in her works. Are novels then to be tried by the rules of a sermon? Surely in works of amusement the too frequent mention of this subject would profane it, and

destroy rather than increase the reverence for it. Are any of the sentiments, or any of the characters enforced by her, contrary to religion? It seems to have been her plan to pourtray virtue, attractive by its own loveliness; and to leave it to divines to set forth the more awful motives of the Revealed Word!

"What moral effect," cry these censurers, "do her tales produce?"—I cannot help smiling when I hear this question asked by those, who hang with rapture over the hobgobleries of the nursery. I suppose they are under the influence of the lessons they were taught in their infancy, when they were studying some of the tedious fables of Æsop or Gay, to value them only as an exemplification of the two lines of trite moral at the end.

Is there then no moral effect produced by an innocent amusement of the mind? Is there nothing in the delineations of scenes which en-

chant the fancy and melt the heart? Is there nothing in the picture of female loveliness

> "Sitting like Patience on a monument
> Smiling at Grief?"

Is there nothing in calling forth that exercise of the intellectual faculties, which at once refines and exalts?

But are these the real causes why the admirable productions of this fair writer have been depreciated? I think not. In some the prejudice was founded on her political principles. She was an approver of the origin of the French Revolution, and in Desmond spoke with too much bitterness of the privileged orders, and of the abuses of ancient institutions. Is there then no freedom of opinion in this country? Is there no forgiveness for one who was smarting under unjust oppression, and exasperated by the undeserved neglect

and insolence of "boobies mounted over her head?" By others her touches of character were too nice; they were too exquisite for the apprehension of some; while to many they laid open the obliquities of the heart, or the head, with too keen a pen. The broad caricatures and glaring colours of common novels, which excited the heavy attention of ordinary readers, were too extravagant to touch the generality of those irritable beings, who shrunk at the sharp incision of Charlotte Smith. For want of these glaring colours, and farce-like personages, some taxed her with want of fancy, and some with a departure from real life. The reverse appears to be the truth.

Of Charlotte Smith's poetry it is not easy to speak in terms too high. There is so much unaffected elegance; so much pathos and harmony in it; the images are so soothing, and so delightful; and the sentiments so touching, so

consonant to the best movements of the heart, that no reader of pure taste can grow weary of perusing them. Sorrow was her constant companion; and she sung with a thorn at her bosom, which forced out strains of melody, expressive of the most affecting sensations, interwoven with the rich hues of an inspired fancy. Her name, therefore, is sure to live among the most favoured of the muse.

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MARGARET CAVENDISH, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE.

MARGARET CAVENDISH, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE, was daughter of Sir Charles Lucas, of St. John, near Colchester, in Essex; and was sister to the first Lord Lucas, and to that celebrated loyalist who fell so heroically in the cause of King Charles the First, and whose memory is immortalised in the pages of Lord Clarendon. She was born about the latter end of the reign of King James, and, in 1645, became the second wife of WILLIAM CAVENDISH, then Marquis of Newcastle. She was the faithful and endearing companion of all

that virtuous nobleman's subsequent troubles and exile, which she contrived to soothe by joining in his literary pursuits, and to gild by the numerous effusions of her own fertile fancy. It is clear from her prefaces, that the major part of her multiplied works was composed during this gloomy period of sorrow, privation, and danger. If her grace's pen was rather too frequently indulged, it is a strange want of candour, and, I may add, want of feeling, that would strive to raise a laugh at amusements so innocent and virtuous, under the pressure of undeserved and patriotic misfortune.

But the truth is, that considerable as is the alloy of absurd passages in many of her grace's compositions, there are few of them in which there are not proofs of an active, thinking, and original mind. Her imagination was quick, copious, and sometimes even beautiful, yet

her taste appears to have been not only uncultivated, but, perhaps, originally defective. Nothing that I have yet read of hers, is touched by pathos; which, indeed, does not seem to have been an ingredient of her mind. On the contrary, we are too frequently shocked by expressions and images of extraordinary coarseness; and more extraordinary as flowing from a female of high rank, brought up in courts.

In direct opposition to the character of her writings, her manners are stated to have been marked by reserve. The duchess's writings were praised at the time by a volume of academic flattery, which, from its unmeasured encomiums, has rather depressed than elevated her fame.

It has been a fertile prey for wits to fasten their stings upon. But it is singular that it contains amongst it authors such as Sir Ke-

nelm Digby, Thomas Hobbes, Joseph Glanvell, Dr. Henry More, Bishop Pearson, Archbishop Dolben, &c. Her grace's genius has been denied and ridiculed by Lord Orford, who is remarkable for the occasional injustice of his sarcasms, as for his wit. She was not only eminent for her genius, and her literary acquirements, but was possessed of every attraction of person, and every moral quality; she was a pattern of conjugal affection and virtue.

She died in London, at the close of 1673; and was buried in Westminster Abbey, January 7th, 1674, where the duke erected a superb monument to her memory.

Autobiography is so attractive, that in whatever manner it is executed, it seldom fails both to entertain and instruct. The Memoirs of MARGARET, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE, written by herself, appear to me very eminently to

possess this double merit. Whether they confirm or refute the character of the literary and moral qualities of her grace given by Lord Orford, I will leave others to judge. The simplicity by which they are marked, will, in minds constituted like that of the noble critic, seem to approximate to folly: others, less inclined to sarcasm, and less infected with an artificial taste, will probably think far otherwise.

That the duchess was deficient in a cultivated judgment; that her knowledge was more multifarious than exact; and that her powers of fancy and sentiment were more active than her powers of reasoning, I will admit: but that her productions, mingled as they are with great absurdities, are wanting either in talent, or in virtue, or even in genius, I cannot concede.

There is an ardent ambition, which may

perhaps itself be considered to prove superiority of intellect. "I fear my ambition," says the duchess, "inclines to vain glory; for I am very ambitious; yet it is neither for beauty, wit, titles, wealth, or power, but as they are steps to raise me to fancy's tower, which is to live by remembrance in after ages." In another place she exhibits traits of herself, such as generally accompany genius. "I was addicted," her grace observes, "from my childhood to contemplation rather than conversation; to solitariness, rather than society; to melancholy, rather than mirth; to write with the pen than to work with the needle, passing my time with harmless fancies, their company being pleasing, their conversation innocent, in which I take such pleasure, as I neglect my health; for it is as great a grief to neglect their society, as a joy to be in their company." Again, she says: "My disposition is more in-

clining to melancholy than merry; but not crabbed or peevish melancholy, but soft, melting, solitary, and contemplating melancholy; and I am apt to weep, rather than laugh."

Perhaps, however, it will be impossible to acquit the duchess of vanity, as well as ambition, if it be vanity to indulge a too general and indiscriminate love of distinction, and to expatiate with too much minuteness about oneself. Some of these minutiæ now afford amusement, arising from other pretensions than those with which they were written.

Her grace, as I have before remarked, was the companion of the duke's misfortune, the solace of his exile, the sharer of his poverty. In these gloomy days she had less opportunity of being acquainted with the splendour of courts, and the characters and manners of men eminent on the theatre of practical life, than with the scenes and actions of her own lonely

imaginations. We do not therefore, find this memoir full of anecdote, or history, or political delineation. It is all domestic; and this domestic painting is its charm.

If the duchess herself were out of the question, it is not uninteresting to have such a circumstantial account of the rest of the noble family of LUCAS. Whether their mode of life be considered as common to others of their rank, or peculiar to themselves, the picture is pleasing and instructive. The mother's character excites respect and affection. The bursting of the storms of civil war upon those days of peace, and virtue, and plenty, which smiled so treacherously on the youth of the duchess, is truly affecting.

" In such misfortunes,' says her grace, " my mother was of an heroic spirit, in suffering patiently where there is no remedy; or to be industrious where she thought she could help.

She was of a great behaviour, and had such a majestic grandeur, as it were continually hung about her, that it would strike a kind of awe to the beholders, and command respect from the rudest."—"She lived to see the ruin of her children, in which was her ruin, and then died!"

"Not only the family I am linked to is ruined, but the family from which I sprung, by these unhappy wars."

The duchess has given with exquisite *naïveté* the account of her own going into the world, as maid of honour to the queen, when the court was at Oxford, and her subsequent attachment and marriage to the duke, then Marquis of Newcastle. Not long after their marriage, the loss of the battle of Marston Moor drove them into exile. They moved from Paris to Holland, whence necessity forced the duchess to come to England to solicit relief out of

the duke's immense estates, which the prevailing powers had seized.

Her grace remained a year and a half in England, during which she wrote her *Poems*, and her *Philosophical Fancies*; to which she made large additions after she returned abroad. After her return also she wrote *Nature's Pictures, drawn by Fancy's Pencil*, in which are her memoirs, and another book. Her *World's Olio* was, for the most part, written before she went to England.

In this exile, and under the disappointment of her ineffectual efforts for relief, she says, "Heaven hitherto hath kept us, and though fortune hath been cross, yet we do submit, and are both content with what is, and cannot be mended; and are so prepared, that the worst of fortunes shall not afflict our minds, so as to make us unhappy, howsoever it doth pinch our lives with poverty; for if tranquillity

lives in an honest mind, the mind lives in peace, although the body suffer."

What can be more amiable and virtuous than a resort to the consolations of literature in such a state? After the enjoyment of high and flattering rank, and splendid fortune, noble is the spirit that will not be broken by the gripe of poverty, the expulsion from home, and kindred, and friends, and the desertion of the world! Under the blighting gloom of such oppression to create wealth and a kingdom "within the mind," shews an intellectual energy which ought not to be defrauded of its praise.

After the Restoration, peace and affluence once more shone upon them amid the long-lost domains of the duke's vast hereditary property. Welbeck opened her gates to her lord; and the castles of the north received with joy their heroic chieftain, whose maternal

ancestors, the baronial house of OGLE, had ruled over them for centuries in Northumberland. But age had now made the duke desirous only of repose; and her grace, the faithful companion of his fallen fortunes, was little disposed to quit the luxurious quiet of rural grandeur, which was as soothing to her disposition as it was concordant with her duty. To such a pair, the noisy and intoxicated joy of a profligate court would probably have been a thousand times more painful than all the wants of their late chilling, but calm, poverty. They came not, therefore, to palaces and levees, but amused themselves in the country with literature and the arts. This solitary state, this innocent magnificence, seems to have afforded contempt and jests to the sophisticated mob of dissolute wits, who crowded round Charles the Second. These momentary buzzers in the artificial sunshine of the royal

presence, probably thought that they who, having the power to mix with superior wealth in the busy scenes of high life, could prefer the insipid charms of lonely nature, were only fit to be the butt of their ridicule! It is probable that the memory of these witticisms might not have entirely faded before the early years of the late Lord Orford, who might have caught the mantle of these sprightly oracles, and have pronounced on the poor duchess's character and amusements in a similar tone!

Still I must not permit myself to be so far heated by my subject, as to surrender the advantages of a just but candid discrimination. Her grace had, as I conceive, talents, as well as virtues, which raised her above the multitude much higher than her rank. Her powers, with the aid of a little more arrangement, of something more of scholastic polish,

and of a moderate exertion of maturer judgment, might have produced writings which posterity would have esteemed, both for their instruction and amusement. But I must admit, that she wanted the primary qualities of genius. She was neither sublime nor pathetic. She had not the talent of seizing that *selection* of circumstances, of touching by a few single strokes those chords which, through the force of association, in our ideas, calls up at once whole pictures!

Imitators, and they whose poetical faculties are not genuine, multiply images, by which, while they think they are excelling their models, they destroy the whole charm.

Her grace wanted taste; she knew not what to obtrude, and what to leave out. She pours forth every thing with an undistinguishing hand, and mixes the serious, the colloquial, and even the vulgar, in a manner which can-

not be defended. In her Memoirs this great fault is less apparent than any of her other compositions.

But we must not compare these compositions with the more refined exactness of later times. In those days, what female writer was there who could endure the critical acumen of the present period? Who now reads Mrs. Catharine Phillips, better known by her poetical name of *Orinda?* And Mrs. Behn, who lived somewhat later, is more remarkable for her licentiousness than for any better quality. Even of Mrs. Killigrew, the encomium bestowed by Dr. Johnson is generally thought to be undeserved. The Countess of Pembroke, Lady Carew, Lady Wrothe, and a few others, succeeded; but their productions are now unnoticed, except by a few black-letter literati.

Lord Clarendon has drawn the portrait of

the Duke of Newcastle to the life. On that rock let it stand, without any fear that it can be shaken by the frivolous objections of Lord Orford. The duke died December 25, 1676, aged eighty-four, leaving issue, by his first wife Elizabeth, daughter and heir of William Basset, Esq., of Blore, in Staffordshire, an only surviving son, Henry Cavendish, second and last Duke of Newcastle of that name, who died in 1691, whose heir is the Duke of Portland; and three daughters, of whom Lady Elizabeth married John Egerton, second Earl of Bridgewater: a lady of incomparable virtue, beauty, and understanding, of whom her husband desired to have it recorded on her tomb, that "he enjoyed almost two-and-twenty years all the happiness that a man could receive in the sweet society of the best of wives."

I will give two sonnets on the character of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle.

I.

"My royal master, what a fate was thine!
Thy virtues grave, with richest culture deck'd,
Thy spirit high, enduring fortitude,
Thy tender heart, and moral melancholy,
Though not by false conceit of right divine,
Were fitted well the splendours to protect
Of a wise court from rabbles dark and rude;
But victim-doom'd of deep-laid plots unholy,
Thou could'st not conquer the mysterious force
Of human ills by Providence permitted,
The tide of time, in its resistless course,
Burst to the goal which Satan's views befitted
Satan, who veiling his rebellious fire,
Put on the puritan's disguised ire."

II.

"O, to look back from slaughter'd fields, and halls
And castles ruin'd, and from banner'd graves,
To those auspicious days of feudal glory,
Where vaulted with song and mirth resounded;

Where minstrels, at the hospitable calls
Of lordly chiefs, pour'd out the song that braves
Sorrow and danger, from the page of story
Calling forth heroes, by their foes surrounded,
Dealing their death-blows with victorious arm,
While crowds of listeners swelling at the song,
And gentle ladies darting beauty's charm,
With echoing plaudits round the harper throng.
O, days of splendid hope and social joy,
Which rebel Satan came in envy to destroy!"

The duchess's life of her husband is an important and curious piece of biography, by which we should have been enabled to fully appreciate the character of this loyal and heroic nobleman, even had his character not been so beautifully described by my Lord Clarendon.

The duchess's *Pastime and Recreation of the Queen of Fairies in Fairy Land,* is a beautiful little poem; and, indeed, has been

more than once cited for its merit. It contains, in general, playful and happy selection, both of imagery and language. A few flat or coarse circumstances occur, as in all her grace's compositions, to deform this piece, in common with those of the same age. The following lines are very exquisite, and are a good specimen to give of her grace's poetical genius:—

A dewy waving leaf's made fit
For the queen's bath, where she doth sit,
And her white limbs in beauty show,
Like a new-fallen flake of snow;
Her maids do put her garments on,
Made of the pure light from the sun,
Which do so many colours take,
As various objects shadows make;
Then to her dinner she goes straight,
Where all fairies in order wait;
A cover, of a cobweb made,
Is there upon a mushroom laid;

Her stool is of a thistle down,
And for her cup an acor[redacted]own,
Which of strong nectar full is fill'd,
That from sweet flowers is distill'd," &c. &c.

I will conclude with an extract from the duchess's autobiography: "I hope my readers will not think me vain for writing my life, since there have been many that have done the like, as Cæsar, Ovid, and many more, both men and women, and I know no reason I may not do it as well as they; but I verily believe some censuring readers will scornfully say, 'Why hath this lady writ her own life! since none cares to know whose daughter she was, or whose wife she is, or how she was bred, or what fortune she had, or how she lived, or what humour or disposition she was of?' I answer, that it is true, that 'tis to no purpose to the readers, but it is to the authoress, because I writ it for my own sake,

not theirs; neither did I intend this piece for to delight, but to divulge; not to please the fancy, but to tell the truth; lest after-ages should mistake, in not knowing I was daughter to one Master Lucas, of St. John's, near Colchester, in Essex, second wife to the Lord Marquis of Newcastle; for my lord having had two wives, I might easily have been* mistaken, especially if I should die, and my lord marry again."

* It is remarkable, that this has, notwithstanding, been the case. See "The Lounger's Common-Place Book," vol. iii. p. 398.

GREY BRYDGES, LORD CHANDOS.

GREY BRYDGES, fifth LORD CHANDOS, succeeded his father William Lord Chandos, November 18th, 1602.

He was a friend of the Earl of Essex, in whose insurrection he appears to have been involved; for his name appears in the list of prisoners on that account confined in the Fleet in February, 1600. He was made Knight of the Bath, at the creation of Charles, Duke of York, 1604, and was created Master of Arts with several other noblemen, August 30th,

1605, the king being then present. By the great interest which his hospitality and popular manners obtained in Gloucestershire, and his numerous attendants when he came to court, he was styled KING OF COTSWOULD, the tract of country, on the edge of which his castle of Sudeley was situated. In 1617, he was appointed to receive and introduce the Muscovite ambassadors, who had brought rich and costly presents from their master to the king.

On April 27th, 1612, when the celebrated statesman, Sir Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, took a journey to Bath in his last sickness, he lay the first night at Lord Chandos's house at Ditton.

By a letter of Lord Southampton, printed by Malone, which wants the date of the year, it seems that Lord Chandos was during this

reign engaged in some undertaking, in which he was unsuccessful. "My Lord Chandos hath fayled; for I hear no news of him."

There is no doubt that Lord Chandos was a man of abilities as well as splendid habits of life. He is supposed to have been the author of *Horæ Subsecivæ*, by the late Doctor Lort, upon the authority of a copy of the book which he had seen ascribed to this nobleman. It must, however, be noticed, that Wood ascribes this book to Gilbert Cavendish, eldest son of William, Lord Cavendish, (afterwards Earl of Devonshire in 1618); which Gilbert died before his father.

Wood probably had little reason for ascribing the book to Cavendish, perhaps only the initials G. C. But those learned antiquaries, Mr. Thomas Baker, and Doctor White Kennett, of whom the latter, from his connections with the family, had a particular opportu-

nity of ascertaining the point, if well founded, considered it at least to be very doubtful. Kennett, in a MS. note to his *Memoirs of the Cavendish Family*, adds, "The Reverend Mr. Thomas Baker, of St. John's College, Cambridge, writes to me in a letter dated from Cambridge, June 4th, 1717, 'I met with a book, entitled *Horæ Subsecivæ*, &c. with discourses upon Tacitus, Rome, &c. printed in 1620, by Edward Blount, 8vo. which at first I took to be Blount's character; but looking upon a blank page I found it said to be written by Gilbert, Lord Cavendish, son of William, Earl of Devonshire. Pray, sir, do you know him to be the author of such a book? Your citing Mr. Wood, looks as if you were doubtful in the thing, or as if the family did not claim it. If you want the book, I have it at your service. We owe regard and honour to the family, as allied to the Talbots. He sent

me the book, and I have it now in my custody. W. K." From Nichols's second edition of Kennett's Sermon and Memoirs, London, 1797, 8vo. page 132.

By the internal evidence of the book, it seems more probable to have been written by Lord Chandos, than G. Cavendish, who appears to have died too young to have had the experience which it seems to contain.

I shall give a specimen by the essay "of Visitations," as it is the shortest.

"Feminine thoughts be for the most part enemies to meditation; yet in this subject a help. For it is an idle, womanish, and therefore unnecessary, and no masculine habit, though their weakness in this kind hath entered far into our sex, as it were by imitation; from whence may be discerned the force of ill examples, when so weak ones from weak women can draw us to ridiculousness; being

an outside quality, and expressing nothing of man's inward abilities. And yet it is a wonder to see what multitudes there be of all sorts, that make this their only business, and in a manner spend their whole time in compliment, as if they were born to no other end, bred to no other purpose, had nothing else to do, than to be a kind of living walking ghosts, to haunt and persecute others with unnecessary observation.

"It is an argument either of folly or deceit, for any to be more ceremonious than real, which is necessarily implied in these unnecessary visits. For they express either simplicity or flattery, the one the weakest, the other the basest quality that can be incident to any. Wise men will not view such persons with but scorn, nor respect them but with disesteem; for men of ability and judgment undervalue rather than praise them for these heedless

compliments, as being the practice of light and fantastical, and not of wise men, because these unnecessary visits interrupt actions of more value and worth, with making businesses where there is none.

"Some go abroad, and, God knows, the visited be not beholding to them. For, if these guilty goers be forced to give a reason for their wheeling up and down the streets, their answer is, 'they know not else how to pass the time.' And how tedious it is for a man that accounts his hours to be subject to those vacancies, and apply himself to lose a day with such time passers, who neither came for business, nor out of true friendship, but only to spend the day, as if one had nothing else to do but to supply their idle time! How hard a task this is, those that be haunted with these spirits do so sensibly feel, that I am loth to enlarge their torture; but only advise them to let

those know, who make a profession to pass their time with the loss of mine, that as their visitations be unprofitable to themselves, so they be tedious and burthensome unto me. And if that serve not the turn against their untimely visits, then bolt my door, or hide myself, which shift I have known many put to, for want of other defence.

"And, besides, where these spirits walk abroad, it is rather to show themselves than to see any, which, for the most part, is never in the morning (and especially on Sundays, because it is the best day in the week); all that while they be building themselves, and viewing their own proportions, feeding, instead of a breakfast, upon how brave they shall appear in the afternoon. And then they go to the most public and most received places of entertainment, which be sundry, and therefore they stay not long in a place; but

after they have asked you how you do, and told some old or fabulous [redacted] laughed twice or thrice in your face, and censured those they know you love not, (when, peradventure, the next place they go to is to them, where they will be as courteous to you), spoke a few words of fashions and alterations, whispered some lascivious motion that shall be practised the next day, fallen into discourse of liberty, and how it agrees with humanity for women to have servants besides their husbands, made legs and postures of the last edition, with three or four diminutive oaths and protestations of their service and observance, they then retire to their coach, and so prepare for another company, and continue this vocation till the beginning of the next day, that is, till past midnight, and so home; when betimes in the morning, the decorum is, if it be a lady visitor, to send her gentleman-usher,

to see if all those be well that she saw in perfect health but the night before.

"This hath been more to shew the deformity of it, than the danger which I would rather avoid than unmask, because it touches too many particulars; but in general this. It is the index of an idle and unprofitable disposition, a taker-up of time that may be better disposed; and such a spender of time, that in few actions it can be worse employed. Many an unlawful bargain is concluded upon this exchange; contrary purposes be concealed under this vizard, and few be practised in this art whose manners and lives be not corrupted. Besides, this vain custom, once began, induceth a habit not easily lost, therefore not good to begin; and once practised, it is not so safely left: for begun and not continued, makes the leaving it off esteemed

a neglect, which otherwise would never be claimed as a due.

"There be of this family or sect that are so punctual and methodical in their act, that they turn criticks, and censure those that be not as pertinent in impertinences, and spit not with as good a grace, or speak not to as good a tune (for all their words be but sound, and no sense,) as themselves, when such as are truly intelligent think this scum their praise; for no man that hath any thoughts worthy consideration will bestow the labour to speak, or to entertain argument in such a case, upon so barren and worthless an occasion.

"And these kind of ceremonies be equally tedious to the complimenter and the complimentee, if they reciprocally respect not this fond and dissimulate kind of conversation.

And though it often happens that, in some places where they visit, their tedious society be well accepted, which then must only be allowed to such as are of the same occupation, and are even with them in the same kind; yet sometimes it falls out, they thus running over all kind of noble company, they be to many so unwelcome and troublesome in distracting or diverting their better employments, that oftentimes those they come to, conceal themselves upon purpose, or suppose some necessary business that calls them away, with intention only to get rid of them. From which tediousness, if no better employment of their own can divert them, yet the unseasonable trouble they put those to whom they visit, should even shame them from frequenting so bad a custom.

"Yet custom hath so far prevailed, that I dare not prescribe a total neglect; but counsel

to avoid frequent and assidual practice of so superfluous, though received a fashion.

"Those that duty, love, respect, business, or familiarity, bind us to, we must observe and visit; but they interpret our absence to be either in contempt of their persons or a carelessness and disesteem of their favour and friendship.

"And howsoever, with a non-obstante, I do not by this exclude society and conversation, for such a solitary and unsociable disposition I hold to be worse than this gadder."

Such is the specimen I have to exhibit of the book which is attributed to Lord Chandos. But he by no means led the life of a literary recluse. He was a friend of that active and romantic spirit, Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, as appears in the very extraordinary memoirs which that nobleman left of himself; and, within the last half-century, re-

covered, and given to the public by Horace Walpole.

"Hearing," says he, "that a war about the title of Cleaves, Juliers, and some other provinces, betwixt the Low Countries and Germany, should be made by the several pretenders to it, and that the French king himself would come with a great army into those ports, in the year of our Lord, 1610, my LORD SHANDOIS and myself resolved to take shipping for the Low Countries, and from thence to pass to the city of Juliers, which the Prince of Orange resolved to besiege; making all haste thither, we found the siege newly begun; the Low Country army assisted by four thousand English, under the command of Sir Edward Cecil. We had not been long there, when the Marshall de Chartres, instead of Henry the Fourth, who was killed by that villain Ravalliac, came with a

brave French army thither, in which Monsieur Balagny, I formerly mentioned, was colonel.

"My Lord Shandois lodged himself in the quarters where Sir Horace Vere was; I went and quartered with Sir Edward Cecil, where I was lodged next to him in a hut I made there, going yet both by day and night to the trenches; we making our approaches to the town on one side, and the French on the other. Our lines were drawn towards the point of a bulwark on the citadel or castle, thought to be one of the best fortifications in Christendom, and encompassed about with a deep wet ditch; we lost many men in making these approaches, the town and castle being very well provided both with great and small shot, and a garrison in it of about four thousand men, besides burghers.

"Sir Edward Cecil, who is a very active general, used often, during this siege, to go

in person, in the night-time, to try whether he could catch any centinel's perdue: and for this purpose still desired me to accompany him, in performing whereof, both of us did much hazard ourselves; for the first centinel returning to the second, and the second to the third, three shots were commonly made at us before we could do any thing, though afterwards chasing them, with our swords, almost home unto their guards, we had some sport in the pursuit of them.

"One day Sir Edward Cecil and myself coming to the approaches that Monsieur de Balagny had made towards a bulwark or bastion of that city, M. de Balagny, in the presence of Sir Edward Cecil, and divers English and French captains then present, said, 'On dit, que vous êtes un des plus braves de votre nation, et je suis Balagny, allons voir qui faira le mieux.' Whereupon,

leaping suddenly out of the trenches, with his sword drawn, I did, in the like manner, as suddenly follow him, both of us in the meanwhile striving who should be foremost, which being perceived by those of the bulwark and cortine opposite to us, three or four hundred shot, at least, great and small, were made against us. Our running on forwards in emulation of each other, was the cause that all the shots fell betwixt us and the trench from which we sallied. When M. de Balagny, finding such a storm of bullets, said, 'Par Dieu il fait bien chaud.' I answered briefly thus, 'Vous en ires premier, autrement je n'iray jamais.' Hereupon, he ran with all speed, and somewhat crouched towards the trenches. I followed after, leisurely and upright, and yet came within the trenches before they on the bulwark or cortine would charge again; which passage after-

wards being related to the Prince of Orange, he said it was a strange bravado of Balagny, and that we went on to an unavoidable death."

Grey Brydges, Lord Chandos, died at Sudeley Castle, August 10th, 1620, aged about 42. He married Lady Anne Stanley, eldest daughter and co-heir of Ferdinando Stanley, Earl of Derby, by Alice his wife, daughter of Sir John Spenser of Althorpe, Knt. By this marriage he added a profusion of illustrious blood, and high alliances to his family. Alice Spenser,* Countess Dowager of Derby, was the patroness of Spenser, Milton, and other men of genius: and J. Warton observes, in his *Notes to Milton's Juvenile Poems*, that her *Peerage Book* is to be found in the volume of poetry of her time.

Jointly with her second husband, the Lord Keeper Egerton, she purchased Harefield

* See the Milton Biography, vol. I.

Place; where they resided together; and where she continued to reside till her death. Here she was honoured with a visit from Queen Elizabeth, whom she received with all the pomp and pageantry of those days.

"I viewed this house," says T. Warton, "a few years ago, when it was for the most part remaining in its original state. It is near Uxbridge: and Milton, when he wrote Arcades, was still living with his father at Horton, near Colnbrooke, in the same neighbourhood. He mentions the singular felicity he had in vain anticipated in the society of his friend Deodate on the shady banks of the river Colne. Epitaph. Damon v. 149.

> Imus? et arguta paulum recubamus in umbra,
> Aut ad aguas Colni?" &c.

Grey Lord Chandos was a noble housekeeper, and by a winning behaviour contracted so great an interest in Gloucestershire, and

had such numerous attendants when he came to court, that he was commonly called *The King of Cotswold.* For, having an ample fortune, he expended it in the most generous manner; his house being kept open three days every week for the gentry; and the poor were as constantly fed with the remnants of his hospitable entertainments. In short, his ability and disposition were so exactly proportioned to each other, that it was difficult to determine which had the greatest share in his numberless acts of beneficence.

Sir John Beaumont, of Grace-dieu, in Leicestershire, Bart., author of the poem of *Bosworth Field,* and elder brother of Francis Beaumont, the dramatic writer, wrote an elegy upon Lord Chandos, and from which I will give a few lines.

" No quill can paint this lord, unless it have
Some tincture from his actions free and brave:

Yet from this height I must descend again,
And (like the calm sea) lay his verses plain,
When I describe the smoothness of his mind,
Where Reason's chains rebellious passions bind:
My poem must in harmony excel,
His sweet behaviour and discourse to tell;
It should be deep and full of many arts,
To teach his wisdom, and his happy parts.
But since I want these graces, and despair
To make my picture (like the pattern,) fair;
These hasty strokes, unperfect draughts, shall stand,
Expecting life from some more skilful hand."

The family of BRYDGES long since attained the highest rank of nobility, and were of ancient descent and considerable consequence centuries before they attained the peerage. There are few old and considerable families, of whom the existing church memorials are so rare as of this once opulent, wide spreading, and indisputably ancient house. Part of this may, perhaps, be attributed to the fate which

involved the chapel of Sudeley in the same ruin with its castle, though no ancient collector has registered any epitaphs previously inscribed in that building. Coberley church retains a few brass fragments; and at Cornbury, in Oxfordshire, there are some. The church of Keinsham, is, however, full of the monuments of that branch.

Epitaphs are justly, perhaps, deemed the dullest of all lore, but there is something so satisfactory in the precise and indisputable proof which they afford of the rank and condition of a family at that distance of time, when the living remembrance of them is long past, that it would not be very wise to forego the use of them when they can be obtained. A sagacious observer knows the hesitation and reluctance with which anything, that sets forth the lustre and consideration of pedigree, is admitted, their names and dates, even

though exact and in their true order of succession, go but a little way in establishing that importance, which it is the object of genealogists to confer.

It is by alliances that we can estimate, with a near approach to accuracy, the sphere in which a family moves. Elizabeth Grey, daughter of William Lord Grey, of Wilton, and wife of John, the first Lord Chandos, was of an house of numerous and truly ancient nobility, whose history and origin are only lost where the Norman annals fade away in the darkness of remoter ages, long before the Conqueror ascended the English throne. The Lords Grey, of Ruthyn (afterwards Earls and Dukes of Kent), of Rotherfield; of Codnor; and of Groby (afterwards Marquises of Dorset, and Dukes of Suffolk, and now Earls of Stamford), were all scions of the same stock. But the Wilton branch were a race

of hardy warriors, whose castle, on the romantic banks of the Wye, was often deserted for the perilous glory of the French wars, that seldom allowed them to repose under their paternal turrets, in that old age to which they looked as the reward of their adventures. Their narrow and decaying fortunes never seem to have broken their high spirit, and ambition of dignified employment. They knew their place in the state, and won their way to it in spite of falling mansions and the *res augusta domi*. The minion of King James, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, afterwards got their old seat and estate, at Whaddon, in Buckinghamshire, where, after another century, was destined to be the abode of an antiquary of a different cast; and Browne Willis pursued, for a long life, his sedentary and whimsical occupations in the spot which for ages had

been honoured by the presence of the warlike tribe of HAUGHTY GREYS. *Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton,* the nephew of Lady Chandos, is distinguished amongst the heroes and statesmen of the Elizabethan story.

George Gascoigne, the poet, who seems, by a subsequent piece, to have been the poet of the family, has the following lines on the first wife of this peer, who was a daughter of Lord Zouche, of Haringworth.

"IN PRAISE OF ZOUCHE, LATE THE LADY GREY OF WILTON, WHOM THE AUTHOR FOUND IN AN HOMELY HOUSE.

These rustic walls, whom canker'd years deface,
The comely corpse of seemly ZOUCHE enclose,
Whose ancient stock, derived from worthy race,
Procures her praise, whereso the carcase goes;
Her angel face declares her modest mind,
Her lovely looks the gazing eyes allure,
Her deeds deserve some endless praise to find,
To blaze such bruit as ever might endure.

Wherefore my pen in trembling fear shall stay
To write the thing that doth surmount my skill,
And I wish of God, both night and day,
Some worthier place to guide her worthy will.
Where princes, peers, her due deserts may see,
And I content her servant there to be.

Ever or never."

But Lord Grey's memory is enshrined in yet more precious and living colours. He was the patron and friend of the immortal Spenser, whose sonnet to him before *The Faïry Queen* I will indulge myself by transcribing.

"TO THE MOST RENOWNED AND VALIANT LORD, THE LORD GREY OF WILTON, KNIGHT OF THE NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER:—

Most noble lord, the pillar of my life,
And portion of my muse's pupillage;
Through whose large bounty, pour'd on me rife
In the first season of my feeble age,
I now do live bound yours by vassallage;

(Sith nothing ever may redeem, nor reave
Out of your endless debt so sure a gage),
Vouchsafe in worth this small gift to receive,
Which in your noble hands for pledge I leave,
Of all the rest that I am tied t' account:
Rude rhymes, for which a rustic muse did weave
In savage soil, far from Parnasso Mount;
And roughly wrought in an unlearned loom;
The which vouchsafe, dear lord, your favourable doom."

Where, then, can we contemplate a true picture of our nobility at its brighest æras? Yet the very names of those who composed the House of Lords in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, will form a most illustrious list, which will almost speak for itself.

* * * * * *

To draw such a picture, the writer must combine with the heavy, but useful materials of Dugdale, the scattered passages of historians, memoir writers, and state papers;

he must know the manners of the times, as well as the general characters of human nature; and be able, by the activity of a clear memory and strong mind, to fill up outlines at once with penetration and candour.

WILLIAM HERBERT, EARL OF PEMBROKE.

WILLIAM HERBERT, third EARL OF PEMBROKE (of the second creation,) was born at Wilton, February 8th, 1580; and succeeded his father in the Earldom in January, 1601; having received his education in the meantime at New College, Oxford. At an early age Rowland Whyte records a part of his character, which I believe will be found a very general, if not universal, accompaniment of genius. "My Lord Harbert," says this gossiper, "is accounted a melancholy young man." The same is recorded of his uncle, Sir Philip Syd-

ney: the same is unquestionably true of Spenser, and Milton, and Cowley, and Gray, and Collins. But he had, like others of the same endowments, that ambition by fits, which could not rest without aspiring to the fame and glory of active life: to tournaments, and the gorgeous shows of chivalry; to the parade and triumphs of camps, and dangers, and wars.

When his spirits were in this ferment, and a career of active duties thus commenced, the sun, which was warming these virtues into ripeness, set in the grave. The heroic reign of the immortal Elizabeth closed. King James conferred the garter on the Earl of Pembroke, and made him Governor of Portsmouth: but he received no other appointment from the court till 1615, when he succeeded Carr, Earl of Somerset, as Lord Chamberlain of the household. He was nominated to this office, says Lord Clarendon, "more for the court's

sake than his own; and the court appeared with the more lustre, because he had the government of that province."

The court of King James was, as is well known, principally filled with rapacious adventurers from his own country, younger brothers perhaps of ancient and honourable families in that kingdom, but without property, and unused to the greater plenty and luxury of England. At first the great political offices were executed by Englishmen bred in the court of his predecessor, such as Salisbury, and Ellesmere, and Dorset: but most of that which belonged to parade and ceremony, or was in the nature of a sinecure appointment, was filled by the Scotch followers of the monarch. The necessary consequence of this was disgust on the part of those who had been accustomed to the manners of the former reign.

The old English nobility had been put to

many severe straits in supporting the expenses to which the magnificent taste of the queen had driven them: but they had done it, (with the exception of one or two favourites, such as Leicester and Essex,) from their own patrimony: and this had given them an independence of spirit which the haughtiness of the queen herself could not subdue; and a feeling of moral worth which would spurn adulation and servility.

To James, the less supple manners and sterner and loftier taste of an English peer were forbidding and embarrassing. He loved his ease: he loved the looser and coarser habits to which himself and his dependants had been accustomed. But there are times at which kings must yield their inclinations to popular feeling: the fall of Carr communicated part of the disgrace, with which that unhappy man's conduct had so justly covered

him, to the court in which he had been nursed and promoted, and adorned with office and rank and riches. It became necessary to re-invest the office with honours, by the character which he who was to fill it should bring with him. Such was WILLIAM, EARL OF PEMBROKE. "As he spent and lived upon his own fortune," continues Clarendon, "so he stood upon his own feet, without any other support than of his proper virtue and merit; and lived towards the favourites with that decency, as would not suffer them to censure his master's judgment and election, but as with men of his own rank. He was exceedingly beloved by the court, because he never desired to get that for himself, which others laboured for; but was still ready to promote the pretences of worthy men; and he was equally celebrated in the country for having received no obligations from the court, which might

corrupt and sway his affections and judgment.

During this period he exercised his power and patronage with probity, justice, dignity, and discrimination. He encouraged talents and learning, and most delighted in company of those talents: he was liberal even to those of whom he personally knew nothing, upon good testimony of their merits. To the wits and poets of the day he was a general patron, as every one who has looked into the dedications and epigrams of the numerous poetical volumes of the reigns of King James, and King Charles, can bear witness. William Browne, the pastoral poet, in particular, was long, if I recollect, domesticated in his house. Francis Davison inscribed his collection of poems, entitled *The Rhapsody*, to him in a dedicatory Sonnet, as early as 1602.

It was probably among the votaries of the

muse, in the refinements of elegant pleasure, adorned by the magnificence of high titles and a feudal establishment, in the bowers of Wilton, or the groves of Penshurst, that he spent the bloom of manhood, till a corrupt and ill-assorted court called him to one of its splendid offices, which he resigned in 1626 to his brother Phillip, Earl of Montgomery, upon being appointed Lord Steward of the household. About the same time he was elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford.

His lordship married Lady Mary Talbot, eldest daughter and co-heir of Gilbert, seventh Earl of Shrewsbury; but left no surviving issue by her. Her sister was the wife of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, the Collector, grandson of the Duke of Norfolk, who was executed by Queen Elizabeth for treason, in conspiring with Mary Queen of Scots. This match of the Earl of Pembroke was not

happy, as will appear by the character which Lord Clarendon gives of the countess. Lord Pembroke died suddenly at Baynard's Castle, on April 10th, 1630, and was buried at Salisbury. His age was fifty, and I think his death was attributed to apoplexy. Some superstitious prognostications of his end are alluded to by Lord Clarendon, and by Donne in the preface to his poems.

The noble historian, so often cited, thus concludes his beautiful and highly-finished portrait of Lord Pembroke:

"Sure never man was placed in a court that was fitter for that soil, or brought better qualities with him to purify that air: yet his memory must not be flattered, that his virtues and good inclinations may be believed. He was not without some alloy of vice; and without being clouded by great infirmities, which he had in too exorbitant a proportion. He

indulged to himself the pleasures of all kinds, almost in all excesses. To women, whether out of his natural constitution or for want of his domestic content and delight, (in which he was most unhappy, for he paid much too dear for his wife's fortune, by taking her person into the bargain,) he was immoderately given up; but therein he likewise retained such a power and jurisdiction over his very appetite, that he was not so much transported with beauty and outward allurements, as with those advantages of the mind as manifested an extraordinary wit, and spirit, and knowledge, and administered great pleasure in the conversation. To these he sacrificed himself, his precious time, and much of his fortune; and some, who were nearest his trust and friendship, were not without apprehension that his natural vivacity and vigour of

mind began to lessen and decline by these excessive indulgences."

It seems that Christian, Countess Dowager of Devonshire, the daughter of Lord Bruce, was one of those whom this ingenious peer selected for his poetical idolatry. With that gratitude which flattery so often generates, she had carefully preserved his fugitive pieces (mixed, as is evident, with those of many of his contemporaries), in a common-place book; and thirty years and more after the earl's death, in the lady's old age, she gave them to Donne (the son of the metaphysical poet, the famous Dean of St. Paul's,) to publish. Donne used no discrimination, for there are among them, unnoticed, poems of Sir Walter Raleigh, Carew, and others; besides a regular interspersion of those of Sir Benjamin Rudyard, which are announced in the title-page.

Under these circumstances, we have not sufficient evidence of Lord Pembroke's right to any particular pieces, to argue from them the peculiar traits of his genius. I trust, however, that from two or three which I have seen with the name of this nobleman subscribed to them (on the authority of William Browne, the pastoral poet, who, as I have already mentioned, was long an inmate at Wilton, and could not easily be mistaken), some of the best of these lighter lyrical verses may be justly given to our poet. In these there is an airiness, an elegance, and an ingenuity, which could only flow from one who had, at least, touched his lips with the waters of Helicon.

In the luxurious indulgences of such a life as Lord Pembroke led, great efforts and continued labour could hardly be expected. To be perpetually conversant with brilliant trains

of images, and poetical dreams, and to clothe them in language and versification, are widely different, as far as regards art and toil.

It is the fault of this author, as it is of most others of his time, and of almost all of his rank and habits, that he seeks rather for what is pretty and far-fetched, than what is natural and bold, and grand. There is in the simple images of the material world, in pictures of the beautiful face of the creation, in the clear and unaffected expression of the sentiments and feelings of a great and enlightened mind, an attraction, a pathos, or sublimity, which is at once full of instruction and delight. But it seldom happens that those who have spent much of their time in courts, have remained unvitiated by their customs and their varieties. They learn to think that the beauties of the fields, and woods, and groves, and streams, of the sun

and moon, and stars, which are common to all, are not enough for their privileged senses. They aspire to some recondite excellence, some unexpected coincidences of thought, and some forced and unbeaten train of sentiment. These things soothe their silly self-importance, as if they separated them from the multitude!

Lord Pembroke, had he been less pampered by the gifts of fortune and title, might, perhaps, have risen above this petty taste. There is in the moral and intellectual endowments ascribed to him by the luminous pen of the great and eloquent historian, much which was capable of producing flowers of perennial bloom, much which might have touched the chords of an unsophisticated heart, and have lighted up the associations of a pure and native fancy. But who that has been long accustomed to the perfumes

of the hot-house, or the costly wines of luxurious wealth, can be content with the odoriferous breath of nature, or the cup filled from the limpid stream?

If the splendid halls and hospitable tables of the gardens and groves, and streams, which gave an artificial aid to the charms of this nobleman's poetry among his cotemporaries, act no longer as operative appendages to his compositions, they may still gratify a refined curiosity, or afford interesting materials to the deep investigator of human manners. The æra of the accession of the Scotch monarchs to the English throne is among the most peculiar and the most fertile in subjects for criticism, of our national literature.

How certain books gradually vanish out of circulation, and what it is which keeps others still floating on the surface, and still within the reach of the common reader, has never

yet, I think, been so clearly elucidated as to meet with a general assent. It is the common and prevailing opinion, that no book becomes scarce, and is forgotten, which has real and unaffected merit. This probably arises from the assumption, that the true test of merit is popularity. Is there, then, no such thing as an elevation above the public taste, as well as a fall below it? Is there no knowledge above the reach of common attainment, as well as that which sinks beneath it? Are there no powers of thinking too profound, or too subtle for the mob to comprehend?

It will be observed, that a popularity often attends works of genius or of worth co-extensive with their deserts. It does so: but very rarely, if ever, except under the authoritative influence of one or two select master spirits, who had the fashion of the day, and make the

world suspect that they shall incur the stigma of vulgarity and ignorance, if they are not prepared to discuss and to praise that which has thus been prescribed to them. If Paradise Lost were now first published, I cannot believe that there would soon be found a hundred readers capable of relishing it, on their own untaught and unsophisticated judgment; I doubt if any one has ever yet emerged into celebrity by the sole force of his own powers. It is true, that no one can long retain his fame, who has not the basis of merit to stand upon. But partialities and influences, personal, political, or national, must concur to obtain it.

Of all kinds of fame, the fame of a poet, unless his claims be of the very first and most unmingled class, is most delicate and perishable; and most liable to be withered by the capricious breath of the changing taste of the public. It is encouraged to put forth so many

gaudy tints of temporary attraction, so many forced scents of hot-house [illegible]ment; and to combine its nosegays in so many fanciful and artificial shapes, that the very sources of its first delight turn, when their novelty has ceased, into causes of disgust.

There are few verses of the early part of the seventeenth century which can be studied in right of their pure and abstract poetical merit. The reader must have in view other and collateral objects in the perusal of them: he must be in search of historical and personal allusions; he must be investigating the progress of language and of manners; and he must look for pleasure in comparing the relative powers of intellect, and in ascertaining the qualities for which fame was conferred, and the praise of genius bestowed. Milton alone in those days exhibited genius of that unqualified lustre, which it now requires no

adventitious considerations to contemplate with undiminished admiration. Yet Milton, while he was thus displaying the splendor of an unspotted genius, gave tone to no school of poetry, attracted no followers, and drew forth no encomiasts; but may almost be said to have vaticinated in solitude; and to have

"Wasted his sweetness on the desert air."

I must not blame Lord Pembroke for this, as his ears were closed in death before the notes of Milton could well have reached him. Milton was now only twenty-two, and none of his compositions had yet, I believe, passed the press. He who could listen with complaisance to the pastoral strains of William Browne, must have been "lapt in ecstasy" at the Comus, and the Lycidas, of Milton. I now and then imagine that I perceive some of the lesser stamina and forms of expression of Milton's Juvenile Poems in the *Occasional*

Poems of William Browne. There is at least in them something of that "Doric delicacy" which Sir Henry Wotton ascribes to those early blossoms of Milton.

It was to another nobleman, to whom I want proofs to justify me in ascribing the genius which belongs to Lord Pembroke, that Milton was indebted for patronage, and a due sense of the brilliant rays of his poetical dawn. It was to the Earl of Bridgewater that we owe *Comus*.

Those wild wanderings of a fairy creation went, indeed, far beyond anything which the tone of Lord Pembroke's poems authorizes us to think that he could adequately estimate. They deal not in the artificial polish, the laboured wit, the repartee, the epigrammatic point, the quaintnesses, and the complimentary extravagances of a courtier's language and thoughts. They breathe the still-

ness of the woods, and the verdure and freshness of the lawns and streams, and they people the scenery of nature with beings of a higher order, with celestial visitants!

Yet Lord Pembroke had not been educated in a way uncongenial to the fancies of Milton. He was an infant when his uncle, Sir Philip Sydney, died; but he must have imbibed from his mother much of that uncle's romantic cast of mind. Thence he must have learned not only the chivalrous spirit by which both the life and the writings of Sir Philip were inspired, but a veneration of that genius, and those forms by which Spenser had clothed, in the most powerful verse, all the gorgeous imagery of such a romantic cast of intellect. In his uncle's groves, at Penshurst he must have caught the rivalry of the neighbouring palace of Knowle, where Buckhurst had displayed the sombre and terrific pencil of alle-

gorical personification, with a command both of outline and colouring, such as no gifted predecessor, or successor, has ever equalled! Enviable state for a man endowed with a heart, and talents, and generous ambition, like Lord Pembroke! But it was, perhaps, this very enviable state of existence that abated exertion, and lulled pleasure into indolence and forgetfulness! There are times when, as Werter says, "mere existence is happiness;" when to attempt to describe it would be to destroy the spell! I cannot conceive a more seducing condition of life than that of this nobleman: supplied with the luxuries of fortune, with means to draw round him, to receive, and to entertain the accomplished friends who loved and admired him; with the glory of past ages reflected on him, and the splendour of the present in his possession; with beauty at his nod, and power

at his feet, he drank the Circean cup; and, lo! it dropped prematurely from his hands! The grave closed over him; and bays of temporary verdure soon withered on its turf!

WILLIAM BROWNE.

WILLIAM BROWNE, son of Thomas Browne, of Tavistock, in Devonshire, Gentleman, was born in that town about 1590, and sent to Exeter College, Oxford, soon after King James the First ascended the English throne; and thence removed to the Inner Temple, where he published the First Part of his *Britannia's Pastorals*, in folio, 1613: and the Second Part in 1616. These two parts were reprinted, in octavo, in 1625. He also published *The Shepherd's Pipe, in Seven Eclogues*, in 1614, octavo. In 1624, he returned to Exeter Col-

lege, as tutor to Robert Dormer, afterwards Earl of Carnarvon, who was killed at the battle of Newbury, September 20, 1643. He then became a retainer to the Earl of Pembroke; and here, says Wood, "he got wealth, and purchased an estate, which is all that I know of him hitherto, only that, as he had a little body, so he had a great mind. In my searches, I find one William Browne, of Ottery St. Mary, in Devon, died in the wintertime, 1645; whether the same with the poet, I am hitherto ignorant."*

The few slight facts thus recorded by Wood, are amply confirmed by the contents of his various poems. The University of Oxford, and the Pembroke family, make a conspicuous figure in them. All that we have heard and conceived of the character and moral habits of Browne, without possessing

* Wood's Athenæ, by Bliss, vol. ii. c. 366.

the facts on which his contemporaries probably founded them, are in his poems also amply established; and is a strong illustration of an opinion always entertained by me, that we ought to be very slow and reluctant in denying the praises bestowed on individuals by those who were coeval with the subjects of them, merely because the particulars do not seem to justify the fame conferred. Reputation is generally the result of a combination of qualities, and virtues, and performances, many of which having been omitted to be recorded while familiar to every one, have gradually been effaced from memory. Thus the fame of Browne, which his known works never seemed to me to authorize, have been partly founded on the smaller poems now recovered from oblivion. I will not hesitate to say, that I far prefer these latter to his more laboured compositions, which he

gave to the world as the formal efforts on which he chose to rest his honours. This, likewise, is in conformity with another favourite opinion, with which I have always been impressed. To me, the very restraint and artificiality of a work, forced, and polished, and toiled upon, for the public eye, destroys much of the charm, of the ease, and freshness, and vigour, which a mind of high natural powers would otherwise give to a composition. Break the natural and uncalled chain of ideas, wipe off or dry up the dew with which the waters of Helicon sprinkle the first shoot of their plants, and the spell is gone!

There is a simplicity, a chasteness, a grace, a facility, a sweetness, in some of his short poems, which, to me, is full of attraction and delight; and is the more surprising when it is contrasted with the corrupt and absurdly-metaphysical style of most of Browne's co-

temporaries. George Wither had the same simplicity, but he had not the same taste; he wanted selection and compression.

I will at present expatiate no farther on the genius of Browne. On that which seems to have given a colour to the course of his life, I may be allowed in this place to throw out a few sentiments.

Browne's days were enlivened by a patronage, which must have been propitious to his poetical pursuits, of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, whose favour it is apparent that he enjoyed; the character is drawn with such extraordinary brilliancy of language by Lord Clarendon, the great historian of human nature, that it must be familiar to every educated English reader.*

He, whose knowledge of our national story, and whose acquaintance with the biography of

* See the Biography of the Earl of Pembroke.

his country is enlivened by fancy and sentiment, cannot recal the classical bowers of Wilton, or the spacious galleries of Penshurst, without reviving an array of intellectual splendour and glory, that burst upon the mind with melancholy enchantment. For my part, I have often gazed with a pensive transport, till I have forgot myself, on the full-length portrait, drawn by Cornelius Jansen, of this amiable nobleman at Penshurst, faded as are its colours, and desolate and neglected as it hangs, amid numbers of illustrious companions, upon the walls of those magnificent, but now silent apartments!

The well-known Epitaph of the celebrated countess, this earl's mother, has been generally ascribed to Ben Jonson. The first stanza is printed in Jonson's Poems. But it is to be found in the manuscript volume of *Browne's Poems*, and on this evidence may, I think, be

fairly attributed to him. I repeat it here, that the reader may form his own opinion.

ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF PEMBROKE.

" Underneath this sable hearse,
Lies the subject of all verse;
SYDNEY'S Sister, PEMBROKE'S Mother!
Death, ere thou hast slain another,
Fair, and learn'd, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee!

" Marble piles let no man raise
To her name for after days.
Some kind woman, born as she,
Reading this, like Niobe,
Shall turn marble, and become
Both her mourner, and her tomb."

Then follows a long elegy on the countess, beginning thus:

" Time hath a long course run, since thou wert clay."

NICHOLAS BRETON.

Is it an idle curiosity that wishes to unfold the secrets of the grave? I would willingly draw back the veil from the story of this author's misfortunes. He bewails in so many of his writings his sorrows, his sufferings, and his melancholy, that it is impossible to believe these complaints to have been "conjured up for the occasion:" and we seem to have Ben Jonson's authority for our belief that they arose from no fancied causes.

If BRETON was the same person, who owned the manor of Norton, in Northamptonshire,

poverty could scarcely be the ground of his anxieties; for that lordship was transmitted to the owner's male posterity, who are still in affluence, and only sold it within these forty years. On the whole, it seems more probable that the poet was a collateral branch of the same ancient house.

It is the fashion to consider a querulous disposition little entitled to the favour of the public. If by querulous be meant an abundant indulgence in the utterance of fanciful grief, the reprobation is surely just. But it is far otherwise with the expression of real and unaffected sorrow. Cares and misfortunes so universally touch, at some period of life, every feeling bosom, that sympathy with the utterance of genuine grief is a mental exercise almost generally grateful to intellectual beings. He who cannot distinguish true, from pretended sensibility, must be himself insensible.

There is a touch, a colouring, in it, beyond the reach of art. Breton, every where, exhibits this touch and colouring.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth was a period of difficulty for the individuals whom it excited to fame and distinction, in which was cherished an emulation of great things with insufficient means. The splendour required of the great nobility far exceeded the unproductive rentals of their estates. The cries of poverty and distress, which their private letters exhibit, are often very striking. What must then have been the case of the private gentry who followed the court? And, most of all, of the wretched dependents, who hunted after court patronage? Of men, who, as their only passport, were necessitated to waste their little and precarious subsistence in expensive pageantries, and gaudy clothes?

The great heroine, who sat upon the throne,

had only a choice of difficulties through a perilous reign; and her heart, made of stern materials, exacted, without much apparent regret, hard measure of her subjects.

Perhaps it was to circumstances such as these that the difficulties of BRETON's career through life were owing. Perhaps, of gentle and honourable blood, which early excited to look to refined society, and superior station, he had not the pecuniary means to secure that to which his birth taught him to look; and in the alternacy between the strenuous exertions of worldly ambition, and the delirious forgetfulness of the muse's libations, the excursive wanderings of one day undid the whole painful progress of another, till exhausted spirits and continued disappointments brought on melancholy and despair.

Such at least has too often been the struggle of many a great and lamented genius through

this world of danger and mischance. Let him, who seeks the muse's favours as the reward of his toils, not hope that he can join with them a worldling's pursuits. The daily plodder, who bends neither to the right nor to the left, whose eye is never drawn aside by a landscape, however beautiful, and whose hand is never tempted to gather a flower even on the edge of his path, will win the goal of worldly power, and renown, long before him, even at a snail's pace.

Breton enjoyed among his cotemporaries a general popularity. But it has been too frequently proved that fame and support have no necessary nor even probable connexion, in the walks of poetry. A giddy public, while pleased with the songster's ditties, neither thought nor cared about the fate or sufferings of him who produced them. It is a resistless nd incomprehensible passion, which still im-

pels the tuneful complainer to breathe forth his strains of delight or pathos in defiance of the pressure of neglect or want. Could Breton rise again from the grave, and choose his course through this life, it would scarcely be that of a poet, harassed by poverty, and crowned with fruitless laurels.

His *Melancholike Humours* flow from one deeply immersed in the Castalian spring, who had drank fully of its inspiring waters.

In old poetry, it too frequently happens, that we are necessitated to wade through a heavy proportion of crude, inharmonious, and repulsive matter, for the sake of a few happier passages, sparingly intermixed with them. If my taste does not mislead me very widely, it is not so with the compositions of Breton. There is a tender mellifluence in his verses, running through whole poems, which fills me with admiration.

In the address "*to his thoughts,*" with what a calm and noble melancholy does the poet exclaim:

> "If your labours well deserve,
> Let your silence only grace them;
> And in patience hope preserve,
> That no fortune can deface them!"

The soft notes of a plaintive bosom, conveyed in elegant and polished language, after having died away upon the stream of time, shall rise again upon the ear of posterity, and agitate once more the feeling heart, and cultivated understanding.

There is an unadorned pathos in his poem, "*A Doleful Passion,*" which could only have been written under the influence of deep suffering and despondence. In his piece entitled *A Quarrel with Love,* there is extraordinary subtlety and ingenuity of thought, a most happy airiness of expression, and inimitable

simplicity of harmonious metre. It is not easy to account for the oblivion which has enveloped a poet, who could write in this manner. Almost from a boy, the little pieces of Breton, which I found in *Percy's Ballads*, pleased me above almost all in that collection.

The ballad of Phillida and Corydon is a delicious little poem; and from this specimen of his poetical powers, for surely he had the powers of a poet, were distinguished by a simplicity, at once easy and elegant.

" In the merrie month of Maye,
In a morne by break of daye,
With a troope of damselles playing
Forthe " I yode " forsooth a maying:
When anon by a wood side,
Where as maye was in his pride,
I espied all alone·
Phillida and Corydon.

Much ado there was, God wot
He wold love, and she wold not.
She sadye, never man was true;
He sayes, none was false to you.

He sayde, hee had lovde her longe;
She sayes, love should have no wrong.
Corydon wold kisse her then:
She sayes, maydes must kisse no men,

Tyll they doe for good and all.
When she made the shepherde call
All the heavens to wytnes truthe,
Never loved a truer youthe.

Then with manie a prettie othe
Yea and nay, and, faith and 'trothe;
Suche as seelie shepperdes use
When they will not love abuse;

Love that had beene long deluded,
Was with kisses sweete concluded;
And Phillida with garlands gaye
Was made the lady of the maye."

This I will venture to assert, that to peruse and examine the writings of those who have, at any distant period, commanded the public applause or public taste, is always an employment of natural curiosity. The varying fashions of mental character are among the most curious subjects of philosophical inquiry.

If there are those who think that these investigations are the useless impertinences of literature, he, who reflects more deeply, who knows how to value the study of the progress of language, who loves to investigate the changes of manners, and to trace the history of the improvements of the human mind, will form a very different opinion of them. If our poetical phraseology has altogether been enriched and refined since the days of Queen Elizabeth, it has lost something of its strength, and a great deal of its simplicity. It is now too

often marked by an artificial sweetness, or an artificial splendour, which, if it catches for a moment, soon satiates, and then disgusts. The vigour of thought, the idea prevailing over the dress in which it is clothed, characterized the literature of those days far above the present.

If there were no other advantage in a familiarity with Elizabethan literature, the increased taste which it will give us for all the varieties and all the beauties of Shakspeare's language, will be an ample recompense; for I need not say, that in Shakspeare is to be found, above all uninspired writings, the most abundant and inexhaustible treasure of moral wisdom, fitted "to the bosom and business" of every human being, as well as of the most vivid and enchanting poetry.

But Shakspeare so far eclipsed his cotem-

poraries, that common and superficial readers are little aware how much merit is to be found even in them. Even Shakspeare's productions could not have existed without the aid of cotemporary literature, and the collision of other ingenious, though inferior intellects.

But every thing concurred, in the Elizabethan æra, to give a vigour and a range to genius, to which neither prior nor subsequent times have been equally propitious. An heroic age, influenced with the discovery of new worlds, gave increased impulse to fancies enriched by access both to the recovered treasures of ancient literature, and the wild splendours of Italian fiction. A command of language equal to the great occasion was not wanting. For what is there either in copiousness or force of words, or in clearness of arrangement, or in harmony, or grandeur of

modulation, which Spenser at least has not given proofs that that age could produce? The more, therefore, we study those early writers, the more shall we admire the variety and strength of our language.

If we could call up the worthies of Queen Elizabeth's Court from their graves, and examine them, that we might learn from their own lips which of them had enjoyed the greatest happiness in their earthly career, and in what that happiness mostly consisted, should we not be taught to fix on Sydney and on Sackville, and on those days of their lives which were spent in converse with the muse? A man of high talents, and more especially of high fancy and feelings, must be miserable among the intrigues of a court. The mean ideas, the petty cunning, the degraded sycophancy of a true-bred courtier, must disgust him by their baseness, and enrage him by

their success. There is a sort of ungenerous triumph attendant on the good fortune of these groveling minds, which looks with scorn and sarcasm on any other test of ability or worth.

The great Burleigh, eminent as he was, seems in some degree to have partaken of this character. Spenser thus alludes to him in his poem called "*The Ruins of Time.*"

"For he, that now wields all things at his will,
Scorns th' one and th' other in his deeper skill.
O grief of griefs! O gall of all good hearts!
To see that virtue should despised be
Of him, that first was raised for virtuous parts,
And now, broad spreading like an aged tree,
Lets none shoot up that nigh him planted be:
O let the man, of whom the muse is scorned,
Nor alive nor dead be of the muse adorned."

I doubt about the advantages of that miserable policy which depends upon under-plots, intelligences, and minute labours, to conduct the

affairs of a great state. I would rather cut the little knots of treachery and hostility than untie them. I would rather trample upon, and ride over, and crush these paltry snares by bold measures, than attempt to oppose them by counter schemes of similar littleness.

Burleigh could not be a happy man: care and perpetual watchfulness wrinkled his brow, and must have haunted even his slumbers. Suspicion and distrust formed the basis of his strength; and he could never indulge in those higher recreations of our nature, without considering that it would lose that time, which for his own worldly purposes could not be redeemed. The songs of the muse, if they did not forward the intrigues of state, were to him *vox et præterea nihil.* They dealt in other eloquence than seemed to him solid; and relied on other arguments than those of which he felt the force.

It is with the follies, the subtleties, the baseness of mankind, that a cunning politician battles, or negotiates: there lie his studies; those are the mysteries which he loves to investigate and resolve. To him whatever is unprofitable, is childish; and everything is unprofitable which helps him not forward in the paths of his own ambition.

Those sentiments of affection or of hate, which soften or palsy the heart; those mighty images which swell the bosom and elevate the soul, are deemed, in the cold temperament of these worldly sages, an idle waste of delusive energies, which mislead from the severity of truth, and unfit for the purposes of practical life.

How mean must be the enjoyments that are consistent with such narrow ideas. We are told, that the retired Lord Treasurer found a luxury in his gardens, and his books. But

the voice of nature, and the voice of wisdom reproach such grovelling habits of thought. It was for Sydney and Sackville to feel their bliss in such occupations as these. It was for the lover of the muses, and not for him who scorned them, to enjoy their smiles, and inhale delight amid their haunts.

Sydney and Sackville had those gifts of nature, and acquirements of art, which opened their minds to the most genuine and refined pleasures among the venerable oaks of Penshurst, or under the spreading beeches of the ot far distant Buckhurst and Withiam; pleasures inexpressibly enhanced by the contrast with the anxieties and degradations of a capricious and despotic court.

It is not among the least of the numerous praises due to poetry, that it is calculated to people, enrich, and animate solitude, and the virtuous retreats of the country. The mind

that stagnates, in absence from the busy but baneful liveliness of courts, is mean, dependent, and empty. Sir Thomas Wyat, who seems to have had a noble spirit and feeling heart, has a fine moral poem on the sufferings of courtiers, and on the comparative freedom, peace, and purity of a rural seclusion. In the days of ruder and less cultivated intellect in which he lived, how powerful must have been the sentiments, which thus break out into forcible and elegant language.

"This is the cause that I could never yet
Hang on their sleeves, that weigh, as thou may'st see,
A chip of chance more than a pound of wit;
This maketh me at home to hunt and hawk,
And in foul weather at my book to sit;
In frost and snow then with my bow to stalk:
No man doth mock whereso I ride or go;
In lusty leas at liberty I walk,
And of these news I feel nor weal nor woe."

FRANCIS PETRARCH.

Francis Petrarch was born at Arezzo, the 18th of July, 1304, and died at Argua, near Padua, the 20th of July, 1374. Notwithstanding all that has been written about Petrarch in the last three hundred years, a good life of him, and an adequate criticism upon him, are yet wanting. This does not arise from the paucity, but from the abundance of the materials for them. Nor are they materials such as mere industry and labour will master. They require a taste cultivated, enlarged, tender, and refined, exalted; they require an inti-

mate knowledge of the cotemporary history of the principal nations of Europe: they require a profound and philosophic insight into the movements of cabinets; but what they most of all require (next to taste), is an erudition familiar with all the details of the revival of learning, which at this time was in the full vigour of the new expanse of its wings.

That from ages of darkness yet unbroken, or rather with the first dawn of light, which began to dart its rays upon them, two such men as Dante and Petrarch should have burst forth, each of such inimitable excellence in his own department of genius, that no subsequent author has ever approached him, must continue a subject of wonder to every deep thinker, as long as the annals of literature survive!

In the common course of human affairs, refinement, as long as it advances, advances by a gradual progress! Each age improves upon

another, and the excellences at which the most eminent in the arts and sciences arrive, must be estimated by a comparison with their cotemporaries.

Though, I think, the genius of Petrarch cannot be put in competition with that of Dante, yet there are some respects in which, with reference to this particular observation, its merits are more extraordinary.

In finished grace, tenderness, and sweetness of expression, Petrarch has no rival, and no successor! We may conceive how one genius improving upon the language of another, in the use of a common tongue, may, in a succession of ages, bring it to a degree of smooth and elegant polish, which is removed at an incalculable distance from its early usages! We can almost see the steps, in palpable and laborious movement, by which Pope rose in the arts of composition above Dryden; threw out

his expletives, rejected his colloquialities, and gave a contrast to his [illegible] yet not infrequent, escapes of languor and carelessness! We can see Pope, taught by the failures of his mighty rival and master, put forth all his force to amend the faults, which experience proved to be injurious to fame, and thus, by degrees, attain a style of finished composition which has put him, without much danger of removal, at the head of his class! What composition, in tender elegance of language and harmony of numbers, is ever likely to equal the *Eloisa* to *Abelard*?

But Petrarch had none of these advantages. By one inspired leap he arrived at once at this perfection! The words danced into order, threw off their rude dresses, and, arrayed in grace and pathos, moved in perfect music to the call of his lyre. It would have been inexpressibly surprising, even if language, equally

congenial to other walks of poetry, could have been thus attended at this age. But most other walks deal more in mere material objects: they do not attempt to describe such evanescent and spiritual appearances, such shadowy niceties of sentiment, such airy castles, such rainbow hues! These are things which it requires the most perfect parts of the most perfect language to describe!

To dwell for ever on the same subject, to give endless variety to that which appears, to common eyes, always the same; to find language for the most transient and hidden movements of the heart; to reflect these images with a clearness, in which not a speck disturbs the transparency; seems to be a proof (if any proof of this can be admitted) that poetry is really inspiration.

This will appear, to the taste of many, extravagant praise! But it is not said without

long and leisurely consideration. The French have no sympathy for these simple effusions of what is properly called pure poetry; and they, and their followers, will more especially deny it the merit of purity, on account of the occasional conceits with which some of the least excellent of the poems are deformed.

I do not produce specimens of this pure poetry, which shines without alloy in his best sonnets, *in their original language*, because all readers of Italian literature have Petrarch's sonnets at hand: and to those who are not conversant with this language, it would be too hazardous an experiment to undertake to prove the transcendant merit of these compositions by a translation, in which all the spirit and grace might evaporate.

There is in general some undefinable ingredient in the best poetry, which expires in the act of transferring it into another tongue. This

is perhaps in no instance so strikingly illustrated, as in Horace's Odes. No one can be so dull, or so prejudiced, as to deny that those possess a very high degree of the poetical character: but it has proved to have been incommunicable to any version, that I have yet met with.

There is less of this difficulty attached to the productions of Petrarch. Translate his sonnets, in plain prose, and an high degree of the poetical character remains. This is the most powerful of all signs, that *in him* the primary ingredient of the poetry is in the *matter*. It is in the sentiment, or the image; not in the metaphorical dress.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to degrees of *invention*, and the quality of the things *invented*; no one can doubt, that INVENTION is the primary ingredient of a poet. In this ingredient Petrarch cannot contend

with Dante. But because he deals in single figures, rather than in groups, it must not be supposed, that his invention is deficient either in sublimity, in pathos, or in richness. This creative faculty, (which in the strange confusion of terms yet prevailing in psychology, is sometimes called *Imagination*, but is in truth a power much more complex, of which imagination is only one of the instruments or ministers;) possesses the ability and habit of combining not only all the materials with which it has been furnished by the senses, but of mingling them up with ideas and forms, of which no philosopher has yet been able to account for the existence.

No other native faculty of man approaches so near to the character of divine as this! These creations have all the character of reality, except solidity and permanence. Some representation of them may be preserved by

the pen, the pencil, or the chissel; but the originals vanish, as they came, into thin air. It matters not, by accidental hint, the first conception of a great poem was set afloat. Probably a dream, combined with a celebrated passage of Virgil, suggested the first idea of Dante's *Comœdia.*

The creation of a visit to Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, and the description of their inhabitants, under the inflictions caused by their conduct on earth; the pathetic or sublime references to the stories of many of those who figured most in human existence, especially such as Dante had known, or heard of in the eventful times in which he lived, could have been only conceived, and when conceived, only executed by the most stupendous efforts of inventive genius. There is but one poem in the world which can be put in competition with it in this inventive magnificence. I need not

name Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In unity of design, in equality of conduct, in skill and art of arrangement, Milton is superior: it can scarcely be denied he is so in grandeur of subject. The story of the very formation of this globe, and of those who were first destined to people it, and be its lords; the trials to which they were exposed; the Pandæmonium, and the battles of rebellious angels; the first delights of an *earthly* Paradise, before Sin had tainted its enjoyments; are of a still loftier flight than any thing which was attempted by Dante. Gray has said of Milton, in congenial language, that

> "He pass'd the flaming bounds of space and time.
> The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
> Where angels tremble while they gaze,
> He saw!"

But there are many human interests in Dante's poem which Milton's plan would not admit.

With regard to equality, and all that can be done by skill and art, we must not forget that Dante lived more than three centuries before Milton.

It is admitted, that large masses of Dante's work, especially of his two latter poems, are heavy; and shew that no fervid mind can entirely escape the agency of factitious impulses which domineer over the age in which he lives. Dull, useless, and unintelligible subtleties of theology load large spaces of this extraordinary production. At the time, these appeared scarcely less interesting to the poet, than that which filled his unsophisticated fancy.

Above all, he is distinguished for his sincerity; for the unequivocal signs of his inspiration. He speaks as if the spirit was present to him, and that he had no occasion to be using efforts to conjure it up. His language therefore is "o'er informed with thought." He is

often brief, abrupt, surprising, plain, and most poetical when most plain. The instances of this in the favourite story of Dante's cotemporaries, Francesca da Polenta and Paolo di Malatesti, of Rimini, (whence Leigh Hunt has taken his poem), have been remarked by the critics.

In invention then, or creation, to take it in its simplest and first sense, without reference to its grandeur, its force, or its variety, Petrarch cannot emulate Dante. We must inquire next, what is the species of invention which distinguishes him. It is the combination of spirit with matter; the linking of the invisible to the visible world!

Petrarch's Italian poetry may be said to be so confined in its subjects, as scarcely to extend beyond the feelings, the visions, and the actions of two individuals, himself and Laura. But then how endless are the riches of his intellect,

the diversities of his mental experiences, the colours in which he arrays his love; how refined and exalted the movements of his heart; how eloquent and brilliant the images with which he illustrates them; how soft, and beautiful, and harmonious, the language and versification in which they are conveyed!

It has been stupidly supposed by some, that Laura was an imaginary person. It may be admitted that the enthusiastic fancy of Petrarch dressed her up in imaginary charms and virtues. But let any one read Petrarch's account of Laura's death, written in his own hand in the Virgil preserved in the Ambrosienne Library, so often cited, and doubt of Laura's reality if he can.

I have already said, that it would be gross injustice to Petrarch to attempt to convey to an English reader the idea of this exquisite poet's manner or matter by a translation. But

so impossible is it, that his beauty should entirely escape even in a plain prose version, and so easily does that plain prose run into metre, that by the change of the position of a few words, I have found no difficulty in throwing such sonnets, as I have attempted, into the legitimate rhythm; and I flatter myself that the lovers of true poetry may endure them, even in this state.

SONNET IV. PART II.

" Life passes on; it tarries not an hour:
Death follows after with an hasty pace.
Things past and present through my fancy race,
And future in like shadows o'er me lour.
The forms of sad Remembrance overpower
My heart; and while I rest I know no place,
Cast to and fro, I should despair embrace,
Did not self-duty my lost strength restore!
I see the shapes to memory unfold,
That once delight in this dark breast awoke:

I see my ba[redacted] by tempests tost about:
From shore th[redacted] billows I behold;
The pilot lost; the masts and cordage broke;
The stars I wont to gaze on, all gone out!"

But I confess that this attempt at rhyme rather fetters their ease: many of them are far more delicious even in the simplest prose.

Tiraboschi observes, that Petrarch proves by some of his sonnets and canzone, that his excellence was not confined to amatory poetry, but that he made the most sublime and noble subjects the themes of his muse, and used this art as the handmaid and instrument of morals and legislation. He proposes these last compositions as models of the sublime and heroic style.

Every æra of poetry has its fashions, which they, who are not endowed with a lively natural taste, prefer to those productions of a pure and permanent standard, that are the ore of ages.

Vulgar minds easily catch what is artificial, repeat it by rote, and give a temporary celebrity to that which has no other claims to notice than such as are conferred upon it by interest, caprice, or a vicious sense of what is ingenious, captivating, beautiful, or grand.

There are thousands, an hundred times told, who, if left to themselves, would prefer the *Venus de Medicis*, dressed out by the most eminent French milliners of the day, to all the inimitable grace and symmetry of her natural form. But such is the fluctuation of these petty charms of vile human art, that at each successive year a new inundation of admirers, nay, the same admirers, would require a new dress.

Why are the statues of the ancients so grand or so beautiful? Because the "human form divine" is shewn in its natural shape! So it is with poetry; none can last which is obscured

by trumpery [redacted]stume. The heart of man, like his form, [redacted]ways been the same. His love, his anger, his grief, his ambition; his sense of the magnificence or the sweetness of natural scenery; his delight in solitude and silence when exhausted by the turbulence of multitudinous society; the refreshing breeze after heat; the revival of vegetation after wintry barrenness;—above all, the charms of ideal beauty, contrasted with actual experience!

In ages of barbarism, the language is not sufficiently polished, or expressive, for the due communication of the greater part of this extensive matter. In what state it was in Italy at the time of Petrarch's birth has been the subject of frequent and ample investigations. But these investigations have still left a great deal to be cleared up.

Petrarch had much to do; but I will not

deny that THE TROUBADOURS had made great advances in amatory poetry.

There was, in truth, something in the occupation of the Troubadours, in their manners, habits, rank, and adventures, congenial to the spirit of this sort of poetry. Feast, and music; assemblies of beautiful women; the renown of personal bravery; a belief in the marvellous; a rude but glorious grandeur, adapted to feed the desires of the wildest fancy, called forth all the enthusiastic and creative qualities of an ardent mind from their deepest cells. A poet now was the poet of immediate inspiration, not of cold art.

But Petrarch could carry these inspirations into his closet; and add learning and labour to these primary essences, without losing a spark of their fire.

If we could have a full relation of all the minute circumstances of Petrarch's childhood,

as copious as it is the fashion of modern biography to supply regarding those who have lived in later days, we should, no doubt, be made acquainted with numerous proofs of his brilliant faculties in an early stage of infancy. The first thing remarkable would unquestionably be, the extraordinary force with which external images seemed to operate upon his senses. It is probable, that they long held an incontrollable dominion over him, against which his reason could but faintly struggle.

At this time the Latin, and even the Greek classics, were in the course of revival. They aided Petrarch in arranging and unfolding the daily accumulating treasures of his mind. He found in Virgil, in Horace, and in Lucretius, examples, by which the brilliant images reflected by the fancy might be expressed in adequate language; and for the abundance of moral sentiments with which the tenderness of

his heart oppressed him, he found a prototype and a guide in the copious stream of eloquence supplied by the splendid and long matured wisdom of Cicero.

If in pure invention, and on a mighty scale, he had a predecessor in his own tongue, whose sublime and appalling genius might well frighten him from attempting the same career, the field was entirely open to him for those courses most adapted to his best endowments.

Dante often dashed out his gigantic figures by a few bold strokes. He relied upon the strength of his outlines, and the sublimity of the general features of his subjects.

Petrarch loved grace, beauty, tenderness, evanescent shade; niceties, first perceived by no eye but his; hues, that changed as quick as those of the rainbow.

But yet it does not seem, as if at this time he wished to rely upon mere *local* or national no-

velty for his claims to notice. He did not resolve to adopt his native language, because Italian poetry was deficient in the department which his genius was fitted to adorn. His ambition was yet to excel in the tongue of Virgil and Horace.

The temple of his mind was now overflowing with images, pictures, and sentiments; when an event occurred, that set fire to all this train, and gave it a direction for life. He saw LAURA in the church of Avignon; and she became the single form to whom all the idolatry of his future life was paid. From that moment his SONNETS commenced; and for her sake they were written in his native language.

Upon a mind thus gifted, and thus furnished, the fervour of such a passion operated in creating many combinations, that would never otherwise have existed. Whatever be the power by which we combine the simple

images received from without, it is notorious that strong passion and violent excitement add greatly to the activity of that power.

There are numerous individuals, nay, it may almost be said that there are nations, whom it is almost impossible to persuade of the reality of a passion so romantic as that of Petrarch to Laura. Such scepticism betrays great ignorance both of the qualities, and of the history of mankind. It is not necessary to refer to the ages immediately antecedent to that of Petrarch for proofs of romantic passion:—but if it were, the lives of the Troubadours would sufficiently afford them.

Imagination may soon become the ruler of him who yields up the reins to her. And hence she is sometimes a capricious, dangerous, and frightful tyrant.

It is indeed from the abuses to which she sometimes leads her votaries, that hard heads

and cold hearts take advantage to condemn all poetry: poetry, the lamp of life, the organ of our highest sentiments and noblest emotions, the spur of glory, the blazoner of goodness.

Petrarch, full of matter, labouring with the progeny of his inspiration, knew the art only as it was the midwife of their birth. He lived in an age congenial to high emotion, full of romantic manners and striking events. He lived under a benign climate, amid the most genial scenes of nature, and was familiar with the most sublime features of rural solitude. In these recesses the Muses visited him, sat with him, opened their treasures to him, and continually brought the cup of Helicon fresh from the spring with their own hands to allay his thirst. "You drink from *our own* hands," they said; "we seldom visit mortals—future poets, for the most part, must be content to drink at *second hand* from YOURS!"

Then he took the lyre, and sounds of impassioned and hitherto unheard melody descended along the valley of VAUCLUSE; gently agitated the breeze, and whispered tremulously among the leaves, till Silence roused herself from her profound slumber, and Echo, taking up the occasional swell of the notes, sent it across the stream and the valley to the opposite hills.

Vaucluse became a scene of enchantment. Wood-nymphs sprung up amidst the sylvan recesses, and slept upon the banks of the murmuring river, or danced on the knolls and in the glens. Invisible hands struck up night-music in the air, and Laura's form glanced across the leafy alleys in the noon-day sun, or appeared sailing in the clouds by the silver lamp of the moon.

But what was he who peopled these solitudes with such imaginary beings? was he an idle, dreaming, brain-sick lover?—No: he was the

man of the greatest erudition, the greatest moralist, the greatest philosopher; the most profound, the most consulted, and the most active politician of his age!

The love of solitude has always been the passion of great minds, especially of minds endowed with an active imagination; but it seems to have been pre-eminently the passion of Petrarch.

It is only when we cease to have a dominion over our thoughts, that it becomes dangerous; when, for instance, it gives a more uninterrupted sway to the tormenting ideas of sorrow and regret. This was felt by the poet Beattie, who having become the victim of domestic misfortunes, inveighed in his latter days against the dangers of a melancholy solitude.

But the fertility and variety of Petfarch's mind seems to have been inexhaustible. In his poetical character, he was himself, prin-

cipally, the hero of his tale. But then his imagination was such, that what more rich or varied subject could have been found? His genius

"Darts thro' all space, extends thro' earth and sky;
While worlds of spirits meet his mental eye!"

To such a man, what an interruption must have been the ceremonies, the impertinences, the follies, and the dullnesses of society! Not all his genius could have effected more than a small part of the treasures of wisdom he has left behind him, but by the aid of the calm and leisure which his addiction to solitude gave him.

To be one among the numerous eminent persons who have attained a place upon the rolls of Genius, is a ground of just confidence and self-satisfaction, when compared with the multitudes to which every generation of mankind

swells. But what must have been the faculties, and what the attainments of Petrarch, who in so many centuries has found no rival in these rolls? There was an ardour of mind, a love of occupation, a desire of good, an ambition of just fame, which, in proportion as they animate the soul, bear it onward to all great achievements. In no character have these things displayed themselves so conspicuously, as in Petrarch. To these we must ascribe the elevation of ascent in his career, which has left all posterity behind.

In what degrees, or in how many ways, directly or indirectly, writings of so very high an intellectual cast, tend every hour in every day to enlighten the understandings and elevate the hearts of mankind, is beyond the power of the most brilliant and profound philosophers to make a probable calculation. It is certain, that after the lapse of four centu-

ries and a half, the influence of these wonderful compositions, of this treasured wisdom of the poet, the moralist, and the historian, mixes itself with whatever is most tender, most eloquent, or most sagacious, in the minds in which high endowment and high cultivation have been united through all Europe.

In every cultivated age of society the places which have been consecrated by the residence of great genius have excited the most lively curiosity and interest. How this is increased by the natural beauties of the place, and by the sublime, or picturesque features, congenial to the character of the inhabitant. Of all the spots in the world, one of those thus most consecrated to posterity, is Petrarch's residence at VAUCLUSE, near Avignon.

They who are desirous to make an accurate investigation of the character of Petrarch, and more especially to judge of the nature of

his attachment to Laura, and of the qualities of her mind and person, as well as of the certainty of her existence, will do well to study the third dialogue between St. Augustine and Petrarch, *De Contemptu Mundi*, written in 1343, with strict attention.

It seems to me most strange that this account given by the poet of his passion for Laura should leave any reader in doubt of its existence, or of its purity, as well as of its force. The birth of two natural children, of whom the name of the mother has not been preserved, and one of them (a daughter,) apparently a few months prior to the date of these *dialogues*, is opposed by some critics to the sincerity of this attachment. But Petrarch insists on the unblemished and impregnable virtue of Laura: he admits that he has not been himself blameless.

"*Cum confragum et præcipitem*" (me

Laura) "*vident, deserere [illegible] maluit, quam sequi.*" *Incautus in [illegible] offendi: amor, ætasque coegerunt. Firmavi ja[illegible] tandem animum labentem.*" *&c. &c.*

Others represent this love to have been *Platonic*, because *in their* opinion such a passion is a ridiculous chimera. Without admitting this presumption, a reader of fancy and sensibility will find both in the dialogue, and in numerous passages of the poetry of Petrarch, sighs of a temperament sufficiently earthly. A mind gifted by nature, like Petrarch's, and trained as his faculties were, could easily give itself up to that visionary enthusiasm, which appears so improbable to vulgar opinion.

The three grand points of view, in which the general character of Petrarch is to be considered, as has been indeed well done in the ELOGE of this poet by Bettinelli, are:—

1. As the principal restorer of the Latin classics, and of literature.

2. As an original poet, distinguished by fancy, sentiment, grace, and harmony.

3. As an enthusiastic lover of a beautiful and pure morality; as a political, as well as moral philosopher, a patriot, and a philanthropist.

On the first of these heads one thing will strike every scholar: that the style of the poet's Latin compositions does not correspond to this praise.

"Nell' opere sue latine," says Bettinelli, "è maraviglia, che fosse men culto assai, e poco elegante; mentre fu principale suo studio, come ci disse Leonardo Aretino, lo stile di Cicerone."

He adds in a note: "Che se dimandisi come fosse il PETRARCA si elegante in volgare, e si poco in latino, altro dir non saprei se non che

nel primo fu creator del suo stile da Cino soltanto delineato ma nel secondo fu educato dal suo secolo, e dall' esempio de' ritrazi suoi costumi, che non distinguevano ne' testini l'oro dagli altri metalli."*

"Petrarch," says this elegant writer, "had the distinct glory not only of writing well, but of giving the example to others of all good studies and sage letters." His study of Cicero ought to be regarded as the seeds of that fruitful harvest, which sprung up in his and the following age.

By him were brought into credit the other Latin and Greek authors. He searched out and corrected MSS.; he united to these, inscriptions, medals, and every thing else subsidiary to good criticism, and the best philosophy; sparing neither journeys in person, nor letters, which give testimony of his excellent

* P. 182.

taste, and desire of true literature; that is, the polished, and graceful, so opposite to the contentions and pedantic literature of the schools.

But the praise bestowed by Bettinelli on Petrarch, as a poet, is so beautiful and just, that I must give it in his own words.

"Nel vero qual fu prodegio in tanta rozzezza ed asperità di lettere e di cóstumi un poeta dotato di gusto sqiusito, di nobile e saggia imaginazione, di cosi fuo senso, ed organo si delicato? Una poesia con pensieri ed imagini e voli ed affetti sublimi eppur non mai falsi nè inetti, con sintassi poetica, con puro stile tersissimo, con nuove forme e maniere ed espressioni e perenne armonia soavissima accompagnati? E tutto ció senza esempio dell' arti belle antico, o moderno essendo quelle pur anco deforme o sepolte. Quale anima, io ripeto, che spogliandosi d'ogni Siciliana, o Provenzale reliquia, e lasciandosi immenso spazio addietro non che

sonetti, e terze Rime, ma le [redacted] famose canzoni di Dante, di Cino, e del C[redacted]lcanti,* purgò la lingua e la poesia d'ogni lineamento straniero, diè al verso volgare il propio su[redacted] e andamento, cribò le rime, fissò i metri la locuzion la sintassi poetica, e sentir fè sopra tutto quel numero armoniosa, che prima non conoscevasi, e mal porrèbbesi in qualche suona imitativo pittorico degli oggetti, che talor Dante usar seppe accortamente. Primo è solo il Petrarca tra i vincoli della rima corse spontaneo, tra gl' impacci d'un idioma ancor informe colori le idee spirituali, scolpì le forme incorporee, alzò gli affetti ei pensieri al sublime, e giunse a conciliar insieme colla ricchezza e varietà facile de' componimenti il faticoso lavor della lima, e nel solo argomento d'amore alle dolcezze del cuore

* *Donna mi prega*, del Cavalcanti;
Così nel mio parlar, di Dante;
La dolce vista, di Cino,
Tutte tre famose a quel tiempo.

accoppiò l'impe[illegible] della fantasia, le grazie delle stile al' altitudin[illegible]de' concetti, la vere condia della virtù al[illegible]natural vizio della passione, e con greci e l[illegible]ni in valor poetico gareggiando con nuova e nobile poesia superolli."

Petrarch, then, stands elevated far above the petty gules of fashion, to lift or to depress! He stands borne up by the most energetic conceptions of the intellect; on the wings of the most beautiful and sparkling fancy, embalmed in the tenderest emotions of the heart!

He deals in all that is most interesting to the most virtuous and most enlightened human minds, at all seasons, in every epoch, in every country! He catches at those phantoms of the brain that come and go; that dart, like lightning, in momentary flashes, through a night of darkness; he seizes their appearance, gives them a permanent shape, and brings them

before the eye of duller and less apprehensive perceptions!

He throws rays of illumination upon thousands of difficult questions in morals; he discusses and clears up numerous doubts, which are continually conflicting in the conscientious soul; and he abounds in a large range of what "comes most home to the business and bosoms" of the intellectual part of mankind!

But it may be asked, how this can retain its freshness after the transfusion of four hundred years? I answer, from the vigour of the thoughts; from the happiness of the illustration; from the breathing sentiment; the transparent language; the captivating order and harmony of the words. The substance may be transferred to the minds and writings of others! the life, the form, the air, the manner, cannot!

It is, indeed, a matter of inextinguishable wonder, how one man could, by any gift of

talents, ardour, discipline, toil, and fortunate circumstances, outrun all posterity so far as Petrarch has done! If the gradation of talents is, in general, by almost imperceptible degrees, how could one man go beyond others, *tam longo intervallo?* For how great must have been that distance which the advantages possessed by those coming after could not countervail?

Something may be allowed to the very extraordinary fervour of his ambition; to the visionary purity of his mind; to the solitude to which, in spite of all allurements, he dedicated a large portion of his life; to the scenery of that solitude; to his temperance; to his passion for study; to his intense wish of celebrity; to the novelty of expectation; and untried delights of the late-recovered treasures of Roman literature; above all, to the unexplored field of fiction and invention, which was open be-

fore him; where Hope might indulge her fondest visions, and the fogs and damps of criticism had not yet clouded and blighted the sky.

In addition to the works of his imagination, Petrarch's fame, as a moral philosopher, a philanthropist, a politician, and a patriot, stands upon the broadest and deepest basis. "Antiquity," says Bettinelli, "was restored by him from ruin; history, philosophy, erudition, eloquence, owed their revival to him. The most beautiful morality overflows in all his writings: gentleness, modesty, disinterestedness, faithful friendship, piety, direct his ardent zeal for the good of others; for the good of his country; for the honour of Italy. He cast under his feet anarchy, schism, civil discord, superstition, and the fatal errors of ignorant credulity! A great writer, a sublime genius, the ardour of his heart for virtue,

produced a revolution in the pride of human wit; and made Italy the envy and model of nations." And this man was a poet!*

* Petrarch has written an account of his own life, in a celebrated *Epistle to Posterity*, which is prefixed to many editions of his works.

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

THE life, character, and writings of Michael Drayton are too well known to justify a repetition of them in this place.

He was born at Harsull, in Warwickshire, in 1563, and died in 1631.

Drayton appears to have been a man of uncommon industry, and great learning; and I doubt if the acquired stores of his mind were not more copious and weighty than the strength of his genius could manage. Hence he was too apt to fall into flatness, and embarrass his readers as well as himself with

tedious details. The principle of association of ideas, by which the selection of a leading circumstance enables a poet to summon up all the ideas that cling to it in the minds of those whom he addresses, was little known, or seldom practised by Drayton.

Yet in all his works, and especially in his descriptions of inanimate nature, in his "Poly-Olbion," a work of stupendous labour and accurate information, there are innumerable poetical passages; and his writings must always be valuable to the English philologist, the topographer, and the historian.

Drayton,* like most of his tribe, complains of the misfortunes and injuries by which his life had been clouded.

"I am loth," says T. Heywood, in his *Hierarchie*, "to reckon up all in that kind, who,

* Among the best patrons of Drayton, were the Astons, of Tixhall, in Staffordshire.

as they lived eminently, so have died miserable; for it would ask too long a circumstance. Yet I cannot escape *Johannes Campanius*, without communicating to you some few of his *Sapphics*, *de Poetarum Miseriâ*, in these words:

"Nemo tam claro genitus parente;
Nemo tam clarâ probitate fulsit,
Mox edax quem non peremit vetustas,
Vate remoto," &c.

"None that of ancient birth can boast,
Or in their virtue glory most,
But that their memory is lost,
Without a poet.

"And yet whilst others strut in gold,
He wears a garment thin and cold,
So torn, so thread-bare, and so old,
He shames to owe it.

"The Painter by his pencil eats,
Musicians feed out of their frets,
Nay, e'en the labouring man sweats,
Not one 'mongst twenty,

"But is with needful things supplied:
Yet, as if he did them deride,
They poor and wretched still abide,
In midst of plenty.

"Now dried up are the Muses' springs,
And where the swans once wash'd their wings,
Pies chatter, and the screech-owl sings,
There wrongs pursuing;

"Therefore, you dukes of proud ostent,
And princes to whom power is lent,
E'en for your own namesake's lament
The Muses' ruin!"

"Exiguo reliquis quæ dantur tempore restant,
Quæ data sunt vatis numera, semper habet."

"What thou on others dost bestow,
Doth a small time persever;
What thou to poets giv'st, thou hast,
And shalt possess for ever.'

That foreign authors have not only complained of the great scorn and contempt cast

upon the enthusiasms and raptures, as also that no due respect or honour hath been conferred upon the professors thereof. Whosoever shall call to mind the all-praise-worthy and ever-to-be-remembered Spenser, shall find that he much bewailed this inherent and too common a disease of neglect, which pursueth the witty, and inseparably cleaveth to the most worthy: witness his "Tears of the Muses," his "Colin Clout's come home again," and divers other of his works; but more particularly in the tenth eclogue of "The Shepherd's Calendar," in the month entitled *October*.

There is, I think, either in the "Adventurer," or in the "Essay on Pope," an attempt to combat the commonly received opinion of the connection between poetry and imprudence, and, by consequence, between poetry and poverty.

It is true that they are not necessarily connected; but surely the habits of a poet's mind

have a great tendency to withdraw him from that cold and cautious cunning, and those minute attentions to self-interest, which constitute worldly wisdom, and are followed by worldly success. Nor does this apply to poets only: it extends to all who are deeply occupied in the higher ranges of intellect. The reasons and examples of this are so numerous, that it is needless to particularize them: we need only call to the reader's memory a few of the most obvious of our own country and age, Johnson, Cowper, Burns, the late Lord Chatham, Burke, Pitt and Fox.

In the estimate of a cold philosophy, I know not if the possession and the exercise of genius, even when crowned by fame, can overbalance the anxieties and deprivations of poverty, and of consequent oppression and injury, often aggravated by neglect and scorn. Yet he who has an empire in his mind, would do ill to sur-

render that dominion for solid wealth, which is often bestowed on the basest of human beings.

If departed spirits are conscious of the fame which survives their existence on earth, (and who will rashly dare to regret this consolatory supposition?) the soul of Drayton may now be soothed at every revival of his fame, which fulfils the hopes that enabled him, while living, to buffet against the storm of the world without sinking.

The very things that would seem to operate against the advancement of genius, and the acquisition of knowledge, are sometimes the grand instruments of their pupils. At other times genius breaks through all obstacles, and acts in defiance of them.

It is not much ease which gives the faculties power to play. There is a degree of severe exercise necessary, which strong excitement

alone can prompt. It is said of lawyers, that no one ever persevered to distinction in that laborious profession, whom some strong necessity did not urge to great and laborious effort.

Neither adversity therefore, nor other avocations will crush the expansion of genius: sometimes they will not even impede it. Burns and Bloomfield are instances of this.

The powers of the human mind vary so much, require such different food, and display themselves at such different periods of life, that no universal rule on this subject can perhaps be established. But whatever debilitates toil, and weakens attention, cannot, surely, be doubted to operate unfavourably.

Man is so strange a compound of inconsistent qualities, our virtues and vices so border on each other; and so often cross the line, that the imperfect regulation of our hearts is,

above all, in continual inimicality with the improvement of our intellects. Our passions put us into straits, which will not allow us the free play of our reason. Vapours rise before us, and limit or discolour the objects of our sight. We court these vapours, because our eyes are not strong enough to behold the truth.

But truth, and truth alone, must be the pursuit of genius and learning. Nothing else will secure fame; nothing else will make an author's writings live. The flimsy plausibility of perverted talent will disperse, like fogs before the sun.

He may be above the influence of the vain passions of the world, who chooses to be so. Independence, firmness, dignity, rectitude of thought, will secure him respect: they will operate as a charm against insult and depression: they will bow down the insolence of riches and the scorn of rank. But there is a

dazzle both in wealth and in titles, which few are strong minded enough to be unmoved by. And it happens too frequently, that when this strength of mind is assumed, it degenerates into countervailing assumption, which takes the shape of a coarse rudeness.

The stern virtue, which thus finds itself at leisure to unmask truth, and hold those unrestrained conversations with her, for which the submission to worldly desires disqualifies us, is probably among the very rarest of human distinctions. Milton had it: Bacon had it not: and Addison had it not.

Will it be said that a greater mixture with human frailties makes us more familiar with them, and more tender to them? Must then the mind be ignorant of that, of which it has not had practical experience? Will it be contended that Shakspeare's conception of the characters of Lady Macbeth, Othello, Lear,

Hamlet, &c. arose from personal observation? The more free the mind is for the play of its faculties, the more strongly and the more truly it will conceive.

We know scarcely any thing of the private history of Shakspeare: but it must be presumed that his mind was free from great cares, sorrows, and difficulties, because he always displays an elasticity, a cheerfulness, a sunshine, quite incompatible with the load of anxiety and woe.

In Milton we perceive more of suffering and of gloom: but he throws off the incumbent weight like a giant. In Dante and in Tasso, the elastic force, which no oppression could destroy, is more extraordinary. Indeed, in the case of Tasso it shews the strength and blaze of human genius, in a light of which the wonder can never be exhausted.

His reputation indeed, has never, like

many others, perhaps not less deserving, been totally buried. [illegible], in his "Biographical Memoranda," says, Drayton was a butcher's son; and that he lived at the bay-window house, next the east end of St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleet Street; and that the Countess of Dorset gave his monument in Westminster Abbey, and that these verses on it were written by his friend, Francis Quarles.

Do, pious marble, let thy readers know
What they, and what their children owe
To DRAYTON'S name; whose sacred dust
We recommend unto thy trust.
Protect his memory, and preserve his story;
Remain a lasting monument of his glory:
And when thy ruins shall disdain
To be the treasurer of his name,
His name, that cannot fade, shall be
An everlasting monument to thee.

The "Nymphidia" of Drayton, probably

retains more charms for modern readers of poetry, than any of his other productions. It abounds in a light and playful fancy, happily expressed.

The art, however, of the poet in this composition, the dance of whimsical imagery, and the facility of clear and simple expression, must not be confounded with those claims to excellence, which entitle the votaries of the Muse to her higher honours.

Drayton treats his subject as a sort of plaything, with which he seems to sport, as in jest. He neither imparts, nor feels that half-believing seriousness, which, grounded on the superstitions of the vulgar or the credulous, is capable of filling the fancy with such mingled pleasure and reverence, and is so superlatively enchanting in the wild and magical touches of Shakspeare.

These "tiny elves" are rather adapted to

the reach of mind of light-hearted children; while poetry has nothing, perhaps, in the whole range of her multitudinous subjects more congenial to her powers, and more capable of affording the means to display her most magical and tremendous influence, than the superstitious awe of spirits, of an higher and more serious class, which so generally prevails among mankind.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

It is difficult to say any thing *imaginative* of Dr. Johnson, his life has been so fully developed. Besides, he was not a man of imagination, his mind was almost entirely philosophic. His Rasselas is often considered as a proof of his imaginative genius: I do not think it so. A great part of it is moral abstraction: if imagery is sometimes introduced, it is too commonly declamatory, vague, and pompous. The attraction is in a sort of intellectual plaintiveness of moral melancholy. Whatever imaginative stores he had were supplied by observation;

he could not originate them: and this was one of the reasons why [illegible]de was so painful to him.

We may look back with pleasure on the latter part of Johnson's life, when he illuminated the table with his acuteness, his wit, his sarcasms, his extensive knowledge, his admirable discrimination, his readiness of reply, and his moral wisdom: but on his earlier years we cannot reflect without unabated discomfort. He had no visionary lights to cheer him, nothing of poetical hope; his stern mind was applied to reason, to tear away what he deemed to be delusive colourings, from human views and human opinions.

Johnson did not see with patience romantic passions and romantic expectations. He says, in a noble passage of his Tour to the Hebrides, "far be from him a frigid philosophy!" &c.: it was a moment of exalted enthusiasm, not usual to him.

The work upon which Johnson's fame must rest is his Lives of the Poets. I know no work which mixes so much excellence with so many faults. That the former predominate I admit, or it could not have retained its reputation to this day. But there is a spirit of severity and detraction through this great production of intellect which is a radical defect. Johnson's disposition, temper, and habits, were alien to those of a poetical critic. It was an unhappy day for the enthusiasm of high and romantic poetry when Johnson took the critic's pen!

Johnson has exhibited many excellences as a critic, which probably will never be eclipsed or rivalled. Yet his Lives of the English Poets are not only far from perfection, but have many faults. They are written in a spirit of severity and depreciation; and his political prejudices are every where apparent. Occasionally there is a point in his force, and sometimes more point than force; and trite remarks

put on a deceitful appearance of novelty by the use of big words. He had an imagination which, if vague and general, might have been sublime; but he did not cultivate it. The culture of his mind was entirely devoted to reason and moral philosophy. While he exercised himself in nice distinctions, he often sought for faults. He assuredly indulged the mental habit of *nil admirare*. Jealousy and a morbid spleen were both strongly mixed up in the temperament of his taste and feelings. He was never carried away by the enthusiasm of his emotions; yet by the strange contradiction of our human qualities, he was deeply and painfully superstitious. He tried to analyse every composition, as if he wished to break its spell. He never exclaimed with Dryden,

"Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That sung so sweetly and so well."

Then what were the merits to counterbalance these blemishes? First, extraordinary originality, vigour, and acuteness, whenever he puts forth his powers; then, frank and honest expression of his opinions. *Nullius addictus jurare in verba magister.* If he is wrong, it is not a borrowed error. Neither the critical nor the biographical parts were stale compilations, all passed through the sieve of his own intellect. Though perhaps his learning was often not minute, it was infinitely comprehensive and materially digested: he dealt on no misty and half-developed ideas. His experience in literature was great; and he had penetrated deeply into the characters of mankind. Nothing dazzled him, and nothing misled him; unless his own ill humour. Although he had not indulged himself much in the fields of romance, for

> "Not in fancy's maze he wander'd long,
> But stoop'd to truth, and moralized his song,"

yet he had the capacity duly to distinguish and appreciate all the various faculties of genius, and knew exactly the rules of composition, so far as they are founded on reason and wisdom. His taste, or his course of life, had not led him to take delight in those tales of chivalry, or those visions of high and pure imagination of which the Italian school of poetry had given such sublime and eloquent examples. He therefore did not bring to his task those adventitious qualities, which would have greatly enriched it, if not absolutely necessary to its proper execution. But this perhaps was outweighed by his entire freedom from all technical prejudices and subservience to arbitrary usage. He only praised where his own conscience told him it was due. I am afraid that he sometimes blamed, when a sufficient exercise of his conscience would not have justified the blame. His common sensibilities were not gentle: his temper was imperious, contradic-

tory, and rude; and he was willing to take advantage of extraordinary natural quickness, sagacity, and subtlety, to gain a victory—even though unfair—over those who ventured to differ from him. Though he violently resented incivility or disrespect from others, he was reckless how roughly he inflicted them himself. Conscious of his own powers, he was not inclined to shew to others the candour of which he did not himself stand in need. And this remark is as applicable to his literary criticisms as to his conversations and conduct in society.

The great critical work of such an author, demands, above all others, comments and annotations. The contents, though always ingenious, are sometimes perverse. But their worst defect is, that they have a tendency to discourage the highest faculties of poetical genius. They throw no halo over those whom they criticise, but tear the veil from them, and

throw them naked upon the dissection-table. But in addition to these reasons, time has rendered many annotations necessary, of which the want was not apparent when the work was first published. A vast revolution has taken place in the taste of poetical readers. The domain of poetry had at that time been greatly contracted; now it has again been unboundedly enlarged. The character of one age requires to be contrasted with the character of another, and thus they will be mutually corrected and set off. Many may think the age of Johnson more sober and sound; but it is a soberness which, if it checks some absurdities, loses many grandeurs. They who know no other poetry than the productions of the last thirty years, must wonder at the first seeming inapplicability of the greater part of Johnson's criticisms to them. It requires a considerate annotator to shew their bearings upon each

other. It is clear that Johnson preferred moral reasonings, and the results of sagacious observation, to imaginative flights. The organization of Johnson's senses was dull and imperfect: he had little regard therefore for imagery in right of itself. I have no doubt that Dryden and Pope gave him much greater pleasure than Milton.

It is said that the selection of the poets to which Johnson was required to write lives, lay with the booksellers—not with the biographer; admitting this, can it be believed that they would not have taken his recommendation, as they did in the cases of Blackmore and Watts? If Chaucer was then considered too obsolete in his language to render the reprint of him expedient as a commercial speculation, this could not be the case with Spenser. And what conception could readers form of English poetry if they were unacquainted with Spenser? We

must attribute therefore Johnson's omission to recommend the insertion of this poet, so pre-eminent for a creative imagination, to his own want of taste and zeal. Another proof that Johnson's mind, with all its comprehensive greatness, was still narrow in its poetical feelings and investigations, is, that in the criticism upon Milton's great poem, he takes little if any notice of Dante. Whatever originality Milton possesses, he still throughout takes the tone of Dante, and even translates almost literally many of his passages, and with a most happy congeniality of spirit and expression. If Johnson's mind had drank of the fountain of Dante's genius, that genius must have been continually present to him, while he was speaking of the Paradise Lost. Johnson had also before him the great advantage of Addison's admirable critique, on which he can scarcely be said to have improved; while his language is always

inferior to Addison's in simplicity and purity, in elegance and grace.

Johnson was insensible to pure imagination: he was only impressed by that which was complete, and which was illustrative of ideas addressed to the understanding. To this we must attribute his tasteless criticisms on Lycidas, and his absurd dislike of pastoral images and pastoral poetry. And in this way we may account for the great originality, great subtlety, and great strength which he exhibits in his critique on the metaphysical poets, which is by far the most striking, most just, and most excellent of his criticisms. The whole tone of Johnson's narrative of Milton betrays a desire to cavil and degrade: he repeatedly comments contemptuously on little topics, in which he probably is *not* just; but which if just, he ought to have discarded from his notice. Then he tells them, with a sort of conversa-

tional pomposity and bigness of words, which is intended for l[illegible]our, but which, as it wants ease and *naïveté*, is far from being commendable for its style. He is fond of anecdotes—but he does not tell them with a gay and happy levity. His manner is dictatorial, and sometimes vulgar. *Parturiunt montes; nascetur ridiculus mus!*.

Johnson is most at home when he is criticising Dryden and Pope. He himself is of the French school of poetry, and has more of *esprit* than imagination; and has his mind more bent upon life and manners, than upon romantic fiction. Were the visions of the imagination an idle play of the intellectual faculties, this would be the most solid and best school: but this is not so, and from these come our noblest thoughts, sentiments, and passions; and our most sublime energies. It is by these visionary associations duly directed, that we make earth

a paradise, and even our frail and coarse mortal being full of pure and exalted delight in the midst of human sorrows, wrongs, and disappointments. This is not idly said, but from a perfect conviction that all our happiness or misery even here depends upon mind; and that genuine poetry, of a dignified cast, is the best food for it. Any criticism therefore which tends to chill and blight these most glowing emanations of the soul, is injurious to the grandest and most beneficial qualities of our human nature; and whenever it has gained the public attention, requires to be forcefully counteracted. The magnificence of the praise of the Paradise Lost extorted from Johnson's conscience and vast power, when he tied his facilities to the duty, has placed that divine poem in its proper rank as far as the critic's authority can avail. So far that criticism will ever hold its use, as well as the deep interest derived

from pre-eminent acuteness of discrimination, expressed with [illegible]ic vigour of language. Still many sublimities, beauties, and graces of the inspired poem are left unnoticed.

He who should attentively peruse that criticism before he had seen the work itself, would be surprised to meet with unmeasurable charms, of which the critic had given him no anticipation. The excellence therefore of Johnson's volumes in no degree supersedes the necessity of supplemental notes. But many will deem this a perilous task to be undertaken by a subordinate pen. It requires one who has nursed a discipline of mind and track of studies opposite to Johnson, and who can at once admire him, yet not worship him with a blind idolatry.

Indiscriminate praise not only is uninstructive, but soon satiates; but a spirit of cavil and detraction is not less objectionable, and more

ungenerous. As fame is the spur that excites and sweetens toil, and leads to lofty attempts and grand exertions, as Milton attests, the cold repeller of admiration, who comes with his icy clouds to throw vapours over us, and freeze up the glowing current of the soul, commits a moral as well as an intellectual mischief. Johnson enters the field with too much of the temper and arbitrary wantonness of a *vapulator;* and seems to say, "I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my mouth, let no dog bark." The two Warton's would have shewn copiousness of moral, classical, curious and varied learning, more taste and more warmth of praise, but less power and depth of philosophical investigation, and less of axiomatic wisdom. Gray would have been too fastidious; too brief and costive, too scholar-like, and too technical; he would have thrown out occasional gems of the purest brightness, and now and then his

touches of profound and moral melancholy, would have been like rare diamonds of exquisite water, bursting out from a mine. There are merits in Johnson's book, which no other author could have reached; and

Abi plura niterit—non ego paucis,
Offendor maculis;

but let not those faults be mistaken for beauties or for truths. It must however be confessed, with regret, that that very censoriousness contributed to the popularity of the work. It gratifies the envious disposition of the dark-hearted to see laurels plucked from the brow of genius. And under such authority, they console themselves for their own want of taste and apprehensiveness.

Next to the disquisition on metaphysical poetry, what Johnson says of DRYDEN is the most laboured, the most original, and the most

just. Here the critic exhibits niceties of remark and discrimination which no other mind could have effected. Dryden's mind was of that rational character of intellect, which Johnson most admired and cultivated. Dryden was the most varied master of our language, and that Johnson's literary occupations most led him to study. He had therefore meditated upon Dryden's rich and vigorous mind with intensity. But every where in his opinions he shews the bent of

"A mind better form'd to think than to feel,"

as he says of Dryden himself, "for the power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason, than quick sensibility." Upon all occasions that were presented to him, "he studied rather than felt; and produced sentiments not such as nature enforces, but meditation supplies:—with the simple and elemental passions as they spring sepa-

rate in the mind, [illegible] seems not much acquainted, and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused in the tumults and agitations of life."

With faculties so gifted and so improved by culture and labour, Johnson's criticisms were not always calculated to nurse the highest efforts of poetical genius. If Shakspeare's character of the purposes and spells of a poet is true, and that it is true who will dare to doubt, then Johnson did not value most what is most excellent in poetry. Its first purpose is not to reason, but

> " to give to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

There is an intellectual sensitiveness, which, like the strings of the Æolian harp to the breeze, returns music to the external impressions of the grandeur and beauty of nature. Then, when the sleeping ideas of the mind are thus stirred, imaginative creation begins to take place.

Some will contend that these creations are less valuable than explanations of reality and accurate and nice remarks upon them. But we cannot change the essence of things by our individual opinions of what is most useful and instructive. Providence has bestowed upon us these faculties of imaginative pleasure for its own wise purposes, and has thus taught us to aspire to a dignity of thought and sentiment which coarse reality could never excite.

Milton, whose poetical superiority cannot be contested, aimed at very different excellences in poetry from Dryden, and the consequence of this was, that he thought Dryden "no poet." If reasoning is the highest power in prose, it is not in poetry.

That Johnson's mind was warped in his canons of criticism by the cast of his own faculties, cannot be doubted;—when he praised the highest orders of poetry, he praised them against his will. His grand eloge on the Para-

dise Lost is reluctantly extorted from him. Imagination was a faculty which he had taught himself to dread, because it encouraged the diseased superstitions of his mind. He did not love sentimental meditation, because his melancholy tended to despondence. His bodily toils clouded and discoloured his mental visions. If Dryden and Pope are the best poets, then Dante, Ariosto, Tasso, Petrarch, Spenser, and Milton, ought not to stand high in the poetical ranks.

Whatever merits, therefore, Johnson's Lives may have, the spirit of his taste led him to disseminate unjust prejudices against true poetry. A sober spirit of philosophic inquiry is requisite for sound criticism. They who love poetry are persons of warm sensibility; and this may lead to a fonder admiration sometimes than stern reason may authorize. But in excluding an excess of sun, we must take care that we do not let in blight and frost to extinguish life.

The analytical acuteness of Johnson will always make his work instructive, and will support the estimation it has attained; but it is not favourable to the glory of the brightest sons of the Muses. As therefore it will always be popular, an antidote to some of its doctrines is the more necessary.

Johnson had whims and prejudices on the habits of life, and on the manners, pursuits, and passions of mankind, as well as on poetry. He was too apt to judge by his own individual taste. Thus, as he himself preferred a crowded city and the bustle of society to a rural retirement, he ridicules Cowley for his passionate desire of country solitude and quiet: and because he was himself a bigoted Tory, he has no mercy for the Republican principles of Milton. He sneers at Shenstone for the delight he took in adorning his grounds; and does not think that any one can be sincere who professes a love of pastoral scenery.

TORQUATO TASSO.

It is said by Ginguené* that "it has been the common lot of men of genius in all nations and all ages, to be persecuted in their life, and diversely judged of, even after their death." "This destiny," he adds, "seems to have been more generally that of epic poets, than of any other. One might cite for example Homer, Milton, Camoens, and above all, Tasso. The last more unhappy than the rest, was also more invincibly devoted by nature to the poetic talent."

* *Histoire Litteraire d'Italie*, vol. v. ch. xiv.

Perhaps it is not very difficult to account for this unhappy course of worldly disappointment and suffering. That it is the imagination which constitutes the poet, nobody doubts. That the source of imagination is sensibility, appears to me equally clear. The most admirable psychologist, with whom I was acquainted, was M. de Bonstetten. He defines the play of imagination to "consist of the reciprocal action of the sensibility upon the ideas; and of the ideas upon the sensibility." "It composes itself then," he goes on, "1. Of the sentiment, the mover, or exciter of the ideas. 2. Of the ideas put in motion by the sentiment. 3. Of the reaction of the ideas on the sensibility. This definition is founded on the fact, that every sentiment produces in the soul a movement, which gives origin to a series of ideas appropriate to the nature of the sentiment. One other fact comes

in aid of this definition: it is that the memory of the imagination depends on the preservation of the sentiment, which is the mover. It must not be forgotten, that here the recollection embraces not only the series of ideas, but also the intensity and emotion of those ideas."*

Wherein then resides the essence of all that is primary in the ingredients of epic poetry? Is it not in sublimity; in grandeur of sentiment; in self-devotion, a scorn of groveling pleasures; forgiveness; charity; frankness; magnanimity; detestation of guile; a delight in the spiritual; an admiration of the vast? a belief in the glory of virtue; a confidence in the success of heroism; an indignation at artifice; an abhorrence of deceit; a loud and unflinchingexposure of fraud?

To draw with truth, vigour, and effect,

* See "*Recherches sur la Nature et les Lois de l'Imagination. Par Ch. Victor de Bonstetten. Génève*, 1807, 2 *vols.* 8vo.

these qualities as habitually operating on the hero, whose life and actions the poet's inventive powers are to put into motion, not only must his memory be stored with the ideas and the language which are capable of recording them, but his sensibility and his imagination must be impregnated with them both at the moment when he is drawing his outline, and when he is laying on his colours.

Are these the qualities which enable us to cope with the world? What is the sort of serpentine wisdom, which leads to prosperity, or saves us from being victims to perfidy, and cruel and relentless self-interest? Is it not disguise, distrust, love of lucre; incessant attention to private and personal security and enrichment; fair words, when foul deeds are meditated; smiles, where the deepest anger or resentment is boiling in the heart; outward compliance, where secret refusal is plotted; a

mien of polite forbearance and gentleness, where underhand resistance and defeat is about to be put into the fullest force; a pretended flattery and admiration of genius, when it is only valued as the convenient delirium, which will bring the lion within the intriguer's chains; a gross and gaudy adulation of poetry, as a gift of heaven; while it is privately estimated as a flowery bauble, fit only to deck out the hours of idle women and children, who might otherwise be occupied in interfering with the schemes of rapine which the man of desperate cunning is carrying on? Are not these the qualities which lead to wealth, and promotion, and all that saves us from "the hands of rude mischance?"

Is it wonderful then, that the sublime, the melancholy, the generous, the romantic Tasso, was overwhelmed with misfortunes and persecutions? The confinement which he suf-

fered for seven years in the hospital of St. Anne, by the order of his patron, Alphonso, Duke of Ferrara, under pretence of mental derangement, is too well known to be detailed here. It took place in his thirty-fifth year, 1579; and he was not released till 1586, his forty-second year. He died 25th April, 1595, aged fifty-one years, one month, and some days. "During the time," says his biographer, "that he was thus confined as insane, where the treatment to which he was obliged to submit was more proper to augment than to cure his illness, his great folly was, to believe that he could obtain either justice or pity of the Duke of Ferrara. He addressed pieces of verse to him, and to the two Princesses, in which his misfortunes and sufferings were painted in the most touching and lively colours."

Tasso had been now a year in prison, when

in 1580, a surreptitious edition of his four cantos of *Jerusalem Delivered* appeared at Venice from an imperfect copy which had been put into the hands of the grand Duke of Tuscany. This theft was a profound affliction to the author. His friend, Angelo Ingegneri, of Turin, to avenge the glory of the poet, now took the opportunity of putting forth two editions, one printed at Casalmaggiore, in 4to. the other at Parma, in 12mo. from a copy corrected by the author's own hand; an indefensible liberty, which no intimacy of friendship could palliate. These two editions were taken off in a few days: and the Venice editor, in his turn, gave another edition from a copy still more correct; which was also rapidly sold: and all this without even consulting the author, who made the delight, and raised the curiosity of all Italy. At length a young Ferraraise,

attached to the court, and intimately connected with Tasso, undertook to publish an edition superior to all the rest; having the opportunity of consulting the original corrected by the author; and of even conferring, in cases of doubt, with Tasso himself. This edition appeared at Ferrara in June, 1581; was dedicated to Duke Alphonso, and presented to the Prince especially in the name of the unhappy poet. It was done in so much haste, as to be full of incorrectnesses, which yet did not prevent as rapid a sale as the other had had. This was followed by another from the same editor, July, 1581; the first, according to Fontanini, which can be regarded as good and correct. This was followed, three months afterwards, by an edition at Parma, 1581; which has served for the rule and model of all subsequent editions. It is true

then that in this one year there appeared seven editions in Italy, and that there appeared six more in the course of the following months.

"In the midst of this glory," says Ginguené, "amid the sound of these eulogies; amid the applauses which echoed from all parts, while editors and printers enriched themselves with the fruit of his labours, the poor TASSO languished in an hard capacity, neglected, despised, sick, and without even the necessities for the accommodations of life. The ministers of the Duke's will added, without doubt, to the severity of his orders, instead of softening them. The little that they gave him, they seemed to study to give after the time that he had either a want, or a desire for them. That which was still more insupportable in his prison was to be incessantly turned from his studies by the dismal cries with which the hospital resounded; and by noises, capable,

as he says himself, of depriving of sense and reason men the most wise and sane."

The deplorable bard prayed incessantly that these useless rigours might be softened; and tried to persuade himself that Duke Alphonso was ignorant of them. Perhaps he was ignorant of them. But could even his indifference, and want of enquiry, in such a case, be excusable? And how could he support the idea of retaining in chains, him, who at this moment, made his name and the glory of his house, resound through Italy and all Europe? How could he refrain from running to break those chains, while he read in the edition which had just been dedicated to him, this sublime and touching invocation: "Thou magnanimous Alphonso, thou who sustainest me under the fury of fortune, and who guidest to the port a stranger, wandering, agitated, almost engulfed amid rocks and waves, re-

ceive with smiles this work, which I consecrate as a votary at thy altar." And yet he it was—it was this hard and unpitying Alphonso, who had sunk him in this gulf, and held him plunged in it!

"At length his restraint was a little relaxed, apartments were allowed him sufficiently large to walk in; which in the two passed years had not been the case. These were obtained by the solicitations of Scipio de Gonzague, and the Prince of Mantua, Scipio's nephew, who had come to Ferrara, and visited him in his prison. This visit and happy result, reanimated the hopes of Tasso; and he flattered himself he should be free in a few days: but his patience had yet long trials to undergo." &c.

"The year following passed in the same manner. The muses were his sole resources when his health permitted him to labour; his

studies were only interrupted by the visits which men of literature, flocking from all parts of Italy, paid to him; in which interviews the *Maniac of St. Anne* commanded admiration by his wisdom, his spirit, and his knowledge." &c.

"This year, 1583, again held the same melancholy course. But at last the entreaties of the Cardinal Albano, of the Duchess of Mantua; and of many other persons of great credit with the Duke, were so pressing, that one day he sent for Tasso, and told him that he should be liberated in a little time." "He permitted him to go out from time to time in the company of only one person. Tasso could thus frequent many of the most distinguished houses of Ferrara: and could taste one of the pleasures which he most loved, that of animated conversation upon subjects of literature, moral philosophy, and sometimes gallantry; and we find in many dialogues composed by

him, at this epoch traces of these interesting conversations. 'During the carnival of this year,' two of his friends carried him to see the masquerades, a sort of amusement of which he had been always fond. He saw again with pleasure the tilts, the tourneys, and a multitude of knights, diversely and richly armed, combating with an union of grace and valour, under the eyes of numerous assemblages of ladies magnificently dressed. But before the end of this year these slight alleviations were all taken from him without his being able to guess the cause; and he fell into the same solitudes, the same privations, and the same despair as before."

"Alphonso at length consented to release the poet at the instance of Vincent Gonzaga, Prince of Mantua, who became security for him; and took him back to his own court at Mantua with him."

"Scarce escaped from his hard treatment, and the sufferings of his long and unjust captivity, a prey at the same time to physical evils, which cast new sorrows on his moral faculties, he yet forgot both the persecutions which he had endured, and those who had inflicted them; neither hatred nor bitterness approached his soul: we can perceive no traces of either in his discourses, or his letters. For the whole rest of the year he wrote constantly from Mantua to Ferrara, to his dear friend Constantini; we have the correspondence; his labours; and, above all, the *Floridante* of his father; his attachment; his acknowledgments to his faithful friends; his testimonies of recollection of the persons who had preserved a friendship for him; these were the subjects of his pen. Happy and consoling privilege of elevated souls; friend of the muses; and superior to fortune: while in vul-

gar minds, injustice, oppressions, chains re-echoing for a long time, continue the punishment, and perpetuate the sufferings, so that they cannot know how to speak or write of any thing else, that the past is for them all resentment; the future all spent in projects, or hope of vengeance; and, that always exasperated, they find not in the present either enjoyment or consolation."

In November, 1591, he accompanied the Duke of Mantua to Rome, as one of his suite. Thence, in January, 1592, he established himself at Naples with the Prince of Conca. He afterwards removed to the mansion of Manso, Marquis de Villa, most pleasantly situated upon the shores of the sea, and surrounded with beautiful gardens, where the spring displayed the most rich and delightful views. The effect could not be otherwise than happy on the inveterate melancholy and health of

Tasso. Here he finished, a little afterwards, his *Second Jerusalem*. On April 26th, 1592, he again went to Rome. Cynthio Aldrobandini, nephew of Pope Clement VIII., received him in his apartments of the Vatican. His *Jerusalem Conquered* appeared in December following. In the commencement of 1594, he obtained again permission of the Pope and his nephews, to pass the summer at Naples. On his arrival he chose for his residence the monastery of San Severino. He had been at Naples scarcely four months, when Cardinal Cynthio, impatient to see him return to Rome, and having ineffectually invited him many times, proposed, for the sake of attracting him, to obtain a renewal of the ceremony of the triumph in the capital, which had not taken place since the time of Petrarch. The Pope, at the solicitation of his nephew, made the decree. Tasso, to whom Cynthio hastened to

announce it, could not refuse the honour procured for him by [redacted] As to the triumph itself, he was little affected by it: he hinted the same to Manso, in the melancholy adieus which he made to him, when the crown was destined for him, which he believed he should never receive.

THE END.

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